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Prayer and Thought in Monastic Tradition

Essays in Honour of Benedicta Ward SLG

EDITED BY SANTHA BHATTACHARJI, ROWAN WILLIAMS AND DOMINIC MATTOS

BLOOMSBURY

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Introduction

Santha Bhattacharji

This collection of articles, written in honour of Sr Benedicta Ward, is designed to celebrate her contribution to several areas of scholarship: the Desert Fathers, Bede, Anselm, the medieval understanding of miracles and the medieval mystics. When this Festschrift was first mooted, it became apparent that a strong central thread connected these areas of interest: the monastic ordering of life for the purpose of prayer, and the various kinds of thought and writing that result from prayer.

It was decided to approach not so much Sr Benedicta's many students but rather her friends and colleagues for contributions, as the editors knew that many of them would value the opportunity to express the debt they owe to her inspiration, friendship and guidance, which they have experienced over many years. As can be imagined, her colleagues queued up to contribute, and I would here like to express our regret, and our apologies to the persons concerned, that several excellent proposals could not be accepted, both for reasons of space and for reasons of time.

In the end, we have a collection of 21 articles, which have fallen almost miraculously into place around the proposed theme. I hope the contributors will forgive me for eschewing the usual notice of each individual contribution which is common in Introductions of this kind, in favour of making some remarks on the overall themes that have emerged, which I hope will make the collection of genuine usefulness to both advanced scholars and those just setting out. The contributors have nearly all chosen to write about issues that they have been mulling over for years, rather than setting out new material as such. This does not mean that new or underappreciated material is not explored and brought to our attention, but in general the contributors have welcomed, rather, the opportunity to set out a new perspective on a well-studied area.

The result is a collection of articles which can be described as gently, and sometimes quite deeply, revisionist. The received view of, for instance, the development of early monasticism is scrutinized and found to be too narrow and too linear. Boniface emerges as a different personality if set in his monastic context. The evidence for the role of monastic women in the Anglo-Saxon church is questioned and re-evaluated, revealing them as learned women and preachers. Assumptions about the relationship (or lack of one) of Celtic hermits and communities are radically revised, and Peter Damian is shown to have had a paradoxical and unexpected view of the relationship of hermits to 'the world'. Anselm is generally held to be one of the major initiators of the affective strand within private prayer and devotion, but a new narrative of the development of this tradition in the West is suggested by the prayers of John of Fécamp,

a generation earlier. Anselm remains a central figure, however, as the three papers on him in this collection show, but perhaps again unexpectedly, his complexity is explored by emphasizing the centrality of Biblical language to the whole range of his thought. In the later Middle Ages, a strong interaction is demonstrated between monastics and the apparently secular universities. A strong case is also made for the work of academic translation to be taken seriously as an academic enterprise in its own right, as nothing else forces quite such a close scrutiny of every word of a text, the purpose of its style and syntax, and its general linguistic context.

Some articles open up whole hinterlands behind well-known medieval preoccupations: thus Bede is shown to reflect an eighth-century Eucharistic culture with perhaps surprising features, and the controversy surrounding the date of Easter is shown not to be so much a matter of church discipline as pointing to an underlying theology of grace and salvation. Other articles probe our modern assumptions when exploring medieval areas of interest. For example, two articles which discuss miracles point away from a simplistic focus on the phenomena discussed to the underlying coherence and sophistication of the medieval writers' views.

Several contributors reflect the current interest in the way the mind operates, looking at the internal understanding of one or other aspect of prayer. The concept of self as reflected in Carolingian prayers, what monks were thinking as they recited the psalms, what their minds were encouraged to range over in general, the arising of the visual use of the mind in contemplation, all these are explored, along with considerations of what medieval monks themselves understood by 'affective' and how they related this concept to learning.

There are also examinations of movements and practices that spilled out of the cloister to be appropriated by different groups in society. This applies not only to the concept of centres of learning, as already mentioned with regard to the newly developing universities, but also to the major monastic 'industry' of intercession, particularly prayers for the dead. Further, post-Reformation, the whole concept of communities ordered for prayer and growth in holiness re-emerges in new forms in other denominations, consciously taking elements from their monastic predecessors.

The narrative surrounding monastic tradition in the past has tended to define it in opposition to the traditions, values and practices established by other groups in society, whether the royal court, merchant guilds or lay patterns of devotion. What this collection does is to establish the many fruitful interactions between the specifically monastic world and these other groups. The monastic world emerges not as a sealed-off area of medieval life, but one with influence and effects far beyond the cloister.

As stated at the beginning, this collection has come into being with almost miraculous ease and coherence. Nonetheless, some human agents played a vital part in its formation. Chief among these the editors would like to thank Lesley Smith, whose invaluable advice in the early stages shaped the overall theme and title of the Festschrift. They would also like to thank the staff at Bloomsbury-T&T Clark, particularly Design Manager Terry Woodley, who created a splendid cover at extremely short notice to present to Sr Benedicta on her birthday last year. The efficient work of Anna Turton, Caitlin Flynn, Ken Bruce and Grishma Fredric has also contributed greatly to the finished product.

1

Rethinking the History of Monasticism East and West: A Modest *tour d'horizon*

Columba Stewart, OSB

The last 50 years have seen more revisions in understanding the history of Christian monasticism than any comparable period since the Reformation. Some new evidence has been discovered, but the changes have come mostly as a result of reading more broadly than the traditional monastic canon, and reading the familiar texts with the tools of modern historical-critical scholarship. The implications for monastic history of the approaches that created the nineteenth-century upheaval in biblical criticism became clear only in the latter part of the twentieth century. Although these new perspectives are now taken for granted in academic circles, they have yet to make a serious impact on the historical self-understanding of monks and nuns. Some may reasonably argue that there is no reason they should, and that the traditional interpretations of monastic history and the traditional corpus of monastic literature have served well and continue to nourish new monastic generations. But as someone who, like Sister Benedicta, inhabits the realms of both vowed monastic life and the modern academy, I feel it necessary and important to make the effort to bridge them in the hope that both will benefit. My own interest in frontiers between regions and cultures, and in the transmission of ideas across those frontiers, has made me all the more sensitive to the shortcomings of some of the standard monastic narratives, and correspondingly excited about efforts to revisit them for the sake of better understanding of the sources of monasticism and of its continuing potential for transforming the church and the world. The present essay, offered in tribute to one who models for so many of us both monastic fidelity and scholarly rigour, must be modest in scope. I will consider some of the basic assumptions of traditional accounts of the origins of monasticism in the Christian east, and then turn to analogous problems with the received narrative of the rise of Benedictine monasticism in the west.

Ex Aegypto lux?

The traditional story of monastic origins begins with a day sometime in the mid-third century when an illiterate Egyptian farmer named Antony heard the gospel command,

'If you would be perfect, go and sell what you possess and give it to the poor', and actually did so.[1] He disentangled himself from life in his village by stages, and then spent two decades in solitude, from which he emerged to begin a fruitful ministry of teaching and healing. The account of Antony's career by his patron Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, is riveting on every level. It is also riddled with inconsistencies that are the seeds of its modern reassessment. Though Athanasius' hagiography has been received as the story of the 'first monk', it is clear even from the work itself that there were other Christians leading what sounds very much like a monastic life. When Antony takes the final step of separation from his familial and civic engagements, he commends his sister to 'faithful virgins', so that she can be 'brought up' in virginity.[2] He himself begins his monastic life at home, taking instruction from an 'old man' (*gerōn*) in a neighbouring village who had been leading the monastic life (*monērēs bios*) from his youth. For a while, Antony remains in the 'area of the village, according to the well established pattern'.[3] His breakout moment comes when he begins to experiment with living in the desert, which was topographically adjacent to the settled land along the river but symbolically and psychologically quite distinct from it. The desert was the place of tombs and spirits, hyenas and bandits. This move, Athanasius suggests, was something new, the start of a kind of asceticism that would 'make the desert into a city of monks'.[4] Antony, according to Athanasius, became in effect the mayor of this new *polis*.

The historical problems with this account are even more than those suggested by mention of men and women already living in the way that would make Antony famous, even if they were doing so without the cachet of the 'great desert'. Though Antony was praised by Athanasius for his solitude, he seems always to have had something of an entourage. Even during his two decades of supposed reclusion, friends kept him supplied with bread and eavesdropped as he dealt with the demons that inspired so much later artistic imagination.[5] In addition, while Athanasius is at pains to emphasize Antony's lack of bookish culture, even to the point of suggesting that he was illiterate ('in him, memory took the place of books',[6] etc.), Antony's recommendation in the *Life* that his monks jot down their sins suggests not only the ability to read but the even rarer skill of writing.[7] The letters traditionally ascribed to Antony suggest a man of at least some philosophical training as well as considerable knowledge of Christian theology.[8]

Modern commentators on the *Life* have noted these points and also focused on Athanasius' various agendas, such as his battle against Arianism or his desire to manage

[1] For an overview, see Columba Stewart, 'Anthony of Egypt', in Philip F. Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.1088–1101.

[2] *V. Antonii* 3.1, ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, *SChr* 400 (Paris: Cerf, 1994), pp. 134–6. On the evidence for such communities of women, see Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 227–52.

[3] *V. Ant.* 3.3-4, p. 136.

[4] *V. Ant.* 14.7, p. 174.

[5] *V. Ant.* 12.5-13.7, pp. 168–72.

[6] *V. Ant.* 3.7, p. 138.

[7] *V. Ant.* 55.9-12, pp. 284–6. See Stewart, 'Anthony of the Desert', 1092.

[8] As demonstrated by Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint*, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

burgeoning asceticism by promoting a version submissive to episcopal authority and safely distanced from creating problems in the towns and cities.[9] I look in a somewhat different direction, at the influence of the *Life* on later monasticism. Antony's form of monasticism would prove to be more an inspiration than an actual model for monastic living. Its severe asceticism and extended periods of reclusion did not become typical features of monastic practice, nor did the charismatic ministry so particular to the man himself.

Furthermore, the prominence of Antony in the later monastic imagination was part of a carefully cultivated myth of Egyptian monastic origins that belied and even effaced the other forms of ascetic life glimpsed in the *Life* itself, which were ubiquitous in the early Christian world. The genealogy of monastic authority deriving from Antony and passing through the early monks of Nitria and then Scetis, with a collateral branch descending from Pachomius' cenobitic experiment, underlay Greek hagiographical collections such as the late-fourth-century anonymous *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* and early fifth-century *Lausiac History* of Palladius. The industrious translation of these works into Latin, as well as of the *Life of Antony* itself (in two versions), and a corresponding wave of Syriac translations a century later, ensured that such works would provide the standard narrative of monastic origins. Their authority was bolstered by the primordial authority of Athanasius himself as the principal hero of Nicene orthodoxy. This trend continued with the circulation of the *Apophthegmata patrum*, the collections of 'sayings' that have found new popularity through modern translations, most notably for the English-speaking world those by Sister Benedicta.[10] The *Apophthegmata* suggest a timeless golden age of charismatic teachers, including Antony and his heirs in Nitria/Kellia and Scetis such as the two Macarii and the charming Poemen (or Poemens, since there may have been several).

Admittedly, reliance on these texts as historical sources for the rise of monasticism in Egypt has produced memorable results, such as Derwas Chitty's marvellous *The Desert a City*. Attentive reading of Chitty's book, however, reveals that this golden age was in fact a rather brief period in the long history of Christian asceticism.[11] In Chitty's account, the plot begins in Egypt with Antony, Nitria, Scetis and Pachomius. It then moves to Palestine in the fifth century, and wraps up in the seventh century with the Persian and then Arab conquests of Jerusalem, with Sinai standing apart as a continuing beacon of monasticism after the advent of Islam. There are several shortcomings to this way of laying out the story. First, though Chitty mentions the Meletian papyri published by Idris Bell in 1924, he generally sticks to the standard literary sources, which means that his readers have little sense of the other varieties of ascetic men and women, or indeed of the prominence of the Meletian monks, all of whom are seen in the documentary papyri that have so enriched the scholarly terrain

[9] See David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) and Elm, *Virgins of God*.

[10] *Wisdom of the Desert Fathers* and *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*; see also her excellent introductory essay in Norman Russell's *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, a translation of the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*.

[11] *The Desert a City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp. 60 and 66.

of Egyptian asceticism.[12] This variety echoes the pluriformity of Egyptian Christianity and indeed of religion in Egypt itself, in which 'Gnostic' and 'Orthodox' were not as tightly bound as once was thought, as is evident in the modern recontextualizations of Pachomian monasticism.[13]

Second, Chitty's account relies entirely on the Greek sources. Copts find a place if they had a Greek biographer (like Antony) or translator (as for the *Life of Pachomius*). As a result, the dominant figure of Egyptian monasticism from the early fifth century onwards, Shenoute of Atripe, is never mentioned in Chitty's account. Having stood against Chalcedon and its Byzantine advocates, Shenoute would have found no place in the standard narrative, and his voluminous works were never translated from Coptic to Greek.[14] Thus the continuing story of Egyptian monasticism after the devastations of Scetis in the early fifth century finds no place in Chitty's book, which presents the idealized version of monastic origins and transitions later honed in Palestine. This was the context for the gathering of the *Apophthegmata,* which are not time capsules from fourth-century and early fifth-century Egypt, but carefully curated selections chosen in Palestine at least a century after they were supposedly uttered. The principles of selection thus reflect the same editorial positions of other 'canonical' Egyptian monastic literature: Nicene, loyal to episcopal authority, emphasizing the other-worldly rather than the social or political. This is not to deny their historical value, but to remember that the function of the *Apophthegmata* was spiritual formation, not history. It was this Greek Egyptian tradition that would go west and further east, providing a founding myth for monasticism in regions with existing indigenous ascetic movements, just as Egypt had before Antony. The quality of the literature, and the authority with which it was promoted, made it irresistible. The allure of the Egyptian desert would prove stronger than loyalty to local traditions, which in Syria or Mesopotamia could be forgotten in the flood of Egyptian monastic literature now available in Syriac translation. It was inevitable that the origins of monasticism in Mesopotamia would later be attributed

[12] In the *V. Antonii*, the Meletians are referred to as schismatics without reference to the monks among them. Recent publications have exploited the troves of papyri to complement and challenge the literary sources. See, e.g., the studies by James E. Goehring, 'Melitian Monastic Organization: A Challenge to Pachomian Originality', in *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, Studies in Antiquity & Christianity (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), pp. 187–95, and Malcolm Choat, 'Fourth Century Monasticism in the Papyri', in Bernhard Palme (ed.), *Akten des 23. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Wien, 22.-28. Juli 2001*, Papyrologica Vindobonensia 1 (Wien: ÖAW Verlag, 2007), pp. 95–101. For a brief introduction to the problem, see William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 423–5.

[13] See Armand Veilleux, 'Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt', in James E. Goehring and Birger Albert Pearson (eds.), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 271–306, and James E. Goehring, 'Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt', in *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, pp. 196–218.

[14] Shenoute has belatedly generated a sizeable industry of edition, translation and study. For an overview of his significance, see Stephen Emmel, 'Shenoute the Monk: The Early Monastic Career of Shenoute the Archimandrite', in Maciej Bielawski and Daniël Hombergen (eds.), Studia Anselmiana, *Il monachesimo tra eredità e aperture: atti del simposio 'Testi e temi nella tradizione del monachesimo cristiano' per il 50o anniversario dell'Istituto monastico di Sant'Anselmo, Roma, 28 maggio-1o giugno 2002*, 140, 2004, pp. 151–74.

to the Egyptian pearl diver turned Pachomian monk, Mar Awgen, who is said to have arrived at Mount Izla near Nisibis in the mid-fourth century with 70 disciples.[15]

Asceticism and monasticism in Syria, Mesopotamia and Cappadocia

The taxonomy of asceticism in Egypt, as fuzzy as it now seems, nonetheless looks crisp when compared to other parts of the Christian east that also had long-established ascetic traditions. For reasons which remain unclear but perhaps have to do with traditions of biblical interpretation and contact with sectarian Jewish ascetic groups, the Christianity of Edessa and places to its east, beyond the frontier with Persia, seems to have been unusually ascetic in orientation and practice. This asceticism was lived not in the desert, but in the parish, even in the family. It had a recognized place in the church, with a prominence beyond the quiet devotion of a widow or unmarried woman. It was practised by men and women, the 'Sons' and 'Daughters' of the Covenant (*bnay/bnāt qyāmā*), even by married couples, the 'holy ones' (*qaddišē*). It was there before monasticism, coexisted with it for a while, and then vanished under the Egyptian literary tide. We hear allusions to this native tradition in Ephrem's hymns (350–60s), learn more about its values from Aphrahat's discourses (330s), and see it most fully in the ascetic legislation of Rabbula, bishop of Edessa during much of the first third of the fifth century (412–35).[16]

I do not intend to rehearse here what has been skilfully explored by others, but would suggest that although the Syriac expressions of asceticism have usually been treated as a case apart, they may have been both more representative, and their influence more pervasive, than has been thought. The recognition in the early twentieth century that the *Macarian Homilies*, a staple of Byzantine devotional literature thought to be the work of one of the great Egyptian monks, were in fact the very texts condemned by several synods and councils, including the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431), for heretical views of allegedly Mesopotamian provenance revealed previously unsuspected pathways of influence.[17] The further discovery some decades later that

[15] See Jean Maurice Fiey, 'Aonès, Awun et Awgin', *Analecta Bollandiana* 80 (1962), pp. 52–81, and Florence Jullien, 'Aux sources du monachisme oriental. Abraham de Kashkar et le développement de la légende de Mar Awgin', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 225 (2008), pp. 37–52.

[16] The literature is considerable and growing. For an overview, see Sidney H. Griffith, 'Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism', in Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (eds.), *Asceticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 220–45, and more recently, Naomi Koltun-Fromm, 'Yokes of the Holy-Ones: The Embodiment of a Christian Vocation', *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001), pp. 205–18, and Dimitrij F. Bumazhnov, 'Qyāmā before Aphrahat: The Development of the Idea of Covenant in Some Early Syriac Documents', in Dimitrij Bumazhnov and Hans Reinhard Seeliger (ed.), *Syrien im 1.–7. Jahrhundert nach Christus. Akten der 1. Tübinger Tagung zum Christlichen Orient (15.–16. Juni 2007)*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 62 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), pp. 65–81.

[17] For the Syriac background and the early development of the controversy, see Columba Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart: The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to A.D. 431*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); for the broader controversy, see Klaus Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus: ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

one of Gregory of Nyssa's important ascetic writings, the *De instituto christiano*, was based on the *Great Letter* of the same (but now Pseudo-) Macarius, rather than the other way around,[18] gave added force to the argument that both practical and mystical aspects of the Greek ascetic tradition had some roots in Syriac Christianity. Though the Ps-Macarian literature is in Greek, much of its terminology and many of its central spiritual concepts are traceable to Syriac sources.[19]

Gregory of Nyssa brings us close to one of the most important figures in the history of eastern Christian monasticism, his elder brother Basil the Great. Recent studies of the evolution of Basil's so-called monastic 'rules' demonstrate the compositional and redactional layers of these collections.[20] This literary stratigraphy shows that Basil and the communities that he advised were evolving towards greater definition and ecclesiastical regulation from the 360–80s. Basil had close acquaintance with native ascetic movements in his region, especially the communities associated with Eustathius of Sebaste and his own increasingly ascetic family, led by his elder sister, Macrina.[21] Basil had made the Grand Tour of monasticism in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, but it was his local experience that proved to be decisive for him. The Egyptian paradigm had no evident influence on the structure of the ascetic communities he advised, nor on the famous hospice they served near Caesarea (later known as the Basiliad), except perhaps by way of fuelling Basil's condemnation of the eremitical life.[22]

The city a desert

With Basil and Cappadocian asceticism, we come to another way in which modern scholarship has complicated a feature of the classical narrative of monastic development, the polarity of city and desert. We have already seen that Antony's foray into the desert was as much psychological as geographical, and that the ascetics of his day were typically practising their discipline in close proximity to the villages and towns of the Nile Valley. Outside of Egypt the situation was even blurrier, with the interaction between monastic figures and secular communities often more a symbiosis than a polarity. This was especially true of the great cities that continued to play a dominant role in Late Antiquity. Even in Egypt, Alexandria had famous monasteries in its exurbs (the Pempton and Enaton, located five and nine miles west of the city) and offered easy access to Nitria by canal for those interested in a day's outing to see the monks. The romantic aura of Scetis as the ultimate desert outpost was powerful because its situation was exceptional, even for Egypt.

[18] See Reinhart Staats, *Epistola magna: eine messalianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregors von Nyssa 'De instituto christiano'*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse 3. Folge, Nr. 134 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

[19] Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 70–233.

[20] As described by Anna Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); see the summary on pp. 143–5.

[21] See Elm, *Virgins of God*, 60–136, and now Anna M. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God*, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts 22 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

[22] *Reg. fus.* 7 (*PG* 31.928-933).

When one turns to other regions, the symbiosis of city and monastery becomes inescapable. In Antioch, for example, the famously rigorous life of the monks of Mount Sylpios was practically on display for the city dwellers at its foot.[23] Sylpios was no mountain apart, but a kind of monastic high-rise looming over the city, accessible in a matter of minutes. The monks were available for consultation by both men and women (most famously by the mother of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, before and after his birth). Chrysostom, who tried life on the mountain but found it too demanding both physically and, one suspects, socially, recommended brief visits to Mount Sylpios as a way to restore the spiritual equilibrium of the citizens of Antioch. The monks of the mountain became an essential component of Chrysostom's moral crusade in the city, demonstrating as they did the achievability of virtue and, in their kindness and peaceful demeanour, its rewards. They functioned in an opposite manner for his former teacher Libanius, who regarded the monks as uncivilized hypocrites, disruptors of the cultivated life of the city he so deeply loved.[24]

By exalting the dwellers on the peaks, Chrysostom obscured our view of the ascetics in the city itself, both female and male, leaving many questions about them unanswered. This may have been intentional, an indication of the growing episcopal preference for organizing asceticism along clearer lines and with demarcated spaces. Chrysostom's youthful membership of Diodore's study circle in Antioch shows the urban presence of asceticism for young men. His polemics against ascetic cohabitation suggest that the practice was more than a rhetorical straw figure, and his rhapsodic description of female virgins dwelling at home and even doing their own cooking, links life in urban Antioch to what we know about other great cities across the Mediterranean world in which urban, domestic asceticism had become quite common by the later fourth century.[25]

The transition to the monastic paradigm for asceticism across the Empire seems to have happened quickly, doubtless fuelled by the increasingly monasticized episcopate and the growing imperial legislation of asceticism. Details of the process by which this transition occurred have been effaced by the dominance of the standard narratives of monastic development, which typically ignore earlier expressions of asceticism. In only a few places – even with its ambiguities, Chrysostom's Antioch, and Edessa in the early fifth century – can we see a more complete ascetic variegation including both the older domestic asceticism and the new monastic form. Edessa offers the crispest evidence, thanks to the detailed regulations of Rabbula, bishop from 412 to 435. Rabbula issued detailed prescriptions for various groups in the Edessene church,

[23] The classic account remains that of André Marie Jean Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne; Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome fasc. 194 (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1959). See now Columba Stewart, 'The Ascetic Taxonomy of Antioch and Edessa at the Emergence of Monasticism', *Adamantius* 18 (2013).

[24] References to the black-robed mob of monks occur in several of his orations, the most famous being the description in *Or.* 30.8, 'On the Temples', of the monks as 'this black-robed tribe, who eat more than elephants and, by the quantities of drink they consume, weary those that accompany their drinking with the singing of hymns, who hide these excesses under an artificially contrived pallor' (ed. Foerster 3.91; here as in A. F. Norman, trans., *Libanius: Selected Orations*, The Loeb Classical Library 452 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 106–9.

[25] For these, see Stewart, 'The Ascetic Taxonomy of Antioch and Edessa'.

with 56 'Precepts' to govern both clergy and members of the 'Covenant' (*qyāmā*) in the towns, and 26 supplemental 'Admonitions' directed specifically to *dayrāyē*, who lived in communities outside the towns.[26] Rabbula wants his clergy to live like ascetics, and his ascetics to be clearly under the charge of their bishop and his clergy. The *dayrāyē* clearly conform to the new monastic paradigm, and they too are brought within the scope of episcopal and clerical authority, with manifest anxiety expressed in the 'Admonitions' about the possibility that they might become involved in matters either ill-suited to their contemplative duties or likely to create alternative centres of spiritual authority.

Benedict, Gregory the Great and Monte Cassino

My depiction of the emergence of monasticism in the Christian east has its counterparts in the Latin west. The plot has similar elements of selective narratives, pseudonymous texts, and dramatic reinterpretations of central figures and places.

The following remarks are addressed particularly to my Benedictine brothers and sisters, though they have a more general application to those accustomed to viewing the development of western monasticism retrospectively from the Middle Ages.

According to the received narrative of the rise of Benedictine monasticism, sometime around the year 540 an Italian monk known as Benedict wrote a rule of such obvious merit that it was energetically promoted a half century later by Pope Gregory the Great, also his biographer (in Book Two of the *Dialogues*). Gregory sent Benedict's rule to England with his monastic missionaries, and from there it passed to northern Germany with the intrepid Boniface. Meanwhile, this *Regula Benedicti* (*RB*) was gaining ground in Gaul and in Germanic regions to the north and east, easing aside the Irish monasticism brought to the Continent by Columbanus (d. 615). With the ascendancy of the Carolingian dynasty from the mid-eighth century, the *RB* was by now the obvious basis for reform of monasticism throughout the expansive Frankish empire, thereby becoming the dominant, even exclusive, basis for western monastic life.

The fraying of this narrative has come from various directions. First there is the *RB* itself and its author. Rather than viewing Benedict as a brilliant innovator, modern assessments now show his *Rule* to have been heavily dependent on earlier monastic literature, particularly on the *Regula Magistri*, another Italian rule composed shortly before the *RB* (though traditionally thought to have been a later derivative of the *RB*).[27] Benedict was a perceptive and sensitive editor of the rambling and idiosyncratic, but often spiritually rich, teaching of the Master. The result was only

[26] For the Syriac, see J. Overbeck (ed.), *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865), pp. 215–21 (Precepts) and 212–14 (Admonitions); a better edition of the Syriac with an English translation can be found in Arthur Vööbus (ed.), *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism*, Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile 11 (Stockholm: ETSE, 1960), pp. 34–50 (Precepts) and 24–33 (Admonitions). The arrangement in these editions reflects the later manuscript tradition, which placed the legislation for monks first, itself an indication of how things had changed. See Stewart, 'The Ascetic Taxonomy of Antioch and Edessa'.

a third of its source's length, shorn of the entertaining but somewhat demented excurses of the Master and enriched with wise perspectives on how to make a human community actually function. To the material adapted from the Master, Benedict added his own reading of the monastic sources, principally Cassian on prayer and Augustine on fraternal relations. The *RB* was, therefore, a product of its crafter's own *lectio divina* of the sources of the western monastic tradition, which in its turn the *RB* came to epitomize.

Benedict's adaptation of the monastic tradition available to him in existing rules and other writings for the use of his own monastery was typical of the time, as is evident in the contemporary monastic legislation of Caesarius of Arles (470–542), whose *Regula virginum* and its briefer masculine counterpart drew from many of the same sources used by the Master and Benedict. Later rules in southern Gaul were based on that of Caesarius, but it was the *RB* that would prove more influential in later centuries.

There are, however, lacunae in the historical record. Thus the second challenge to the traditional account, and to its cornerstones: Gregory the Great and the monastery of Monte Cassino. Gregory's *Dialogues* are treasured in Benedictine tradition as the sole source for the hagiography and iconography of Benedict. In the *Dialogues*, Gregory famously praises Benedict for writing a rule notable for its discretion and brilliance (*scripsit monachorum regulam discretione praecipuam, sermone luculentum*, c. 36.1). However, the only actual quotation of the *RB* by Gregory occurs in a work thought by its most recent editor to be a clever twelfth-century pastiche.[28] The assumptions that the *RB* was used by Gregory at his monastery in Rome before his election as Pope or was given by him to the missionaries sent to England at the end of the sixth century have been discredited. It seems to have taken longer for the *RB* to gain traction than was previously assumed, especially for a rule promoted by a pontiff of Gregory's stature. Indeed, for almost a century after the presumed composition of *RB* ca. 540, there is no evidence that it was actually followed by a monastic community.[29] When the *RB* first

[27] This saga is well known to western historians; see David Knowles, 'The Regula Magistri and the Rule of St Benedict', in *Great Historical Enterprises. Problems in Monastic History* (London, New York: Nelson, 1964), pp. 135–95. Although suggested by Augustin Genestout in the mid-1940s, the definitive proof of *RB*'s dependence on the *RM* was elaborated by Adalbert de Vogüé first in his doctoral dissertation (*La communauté et l'abbé dans la règle de saint Benoît*, Textes et études théologiques [Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1961]) and then in the edition of *RB* published by Vogüé and Jean Neufville between 1971 and 1977 for Sources chrétiennes (vols. 181–186A). Marilyn Dunn debated Vogüé in the early 1990s in the pages of the *English Historical Review* but generally his view has prevailed.

[28] Adalbert de Vogüé, 'L' Auteur du Commentaire des Rois attribué à saint Grégoire: un moine de Cava?', *Revue Bénédictine* 106 (1996), pp. 319–31. Vogüé adopted this position partway through his multi-volume edition of the commentary for Sources chrétiennes. This was particularly ironic given that Vogüé had been one of the harshest critics of Francis Clark's position that Gregory did not write the *Dialogues* (see following note). It would seem that Vogüé was correct on both points: Gregory *did* write the *Dialogues*, but did *not* write the *Commentary on First Kings*. Albrecht Diem, 'Inventing the Holy Rule: Some Observations on the History of Monastic Normative Observance in the Early Medieval West,' in Hendrik Dey and Elizabeth Fentress (eds.), *Western Monasticism ante litteram: The Spaces of early monastic observance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp 53–84.

[29] Much of the evidence is usefully gathered in Francis Clark, *The 'Gregorian' Dialogues and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 108 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003). Though his main thesis, that Gregory did not write the *Dialogues* (at least not in their present form), now seems to have been disproven, the material he gathers on the origins of the cult of Benedict and the early influence of *RB* is helpful, and a good companion to Diem's 'Inventing the Holy Rule'.

appears in the historical record, in an early seventh-century letter written by an abbot named Venerandus to the bishop of Albi in southwestern Gaul, it is recommended as the 'rule of holy Benedict the Roman abbot'.[30] There is no mention of the wonder-working founder of Monte Cassino described in the *Dialogues*; the letter itself may be a forgery.[31]

As for Monte Cassino, it is the narrative tradition recorded in Paul the Deacon's late-eighth-century *History of the Lombards* that links the *RB* we know to the monastery founded by the Benedict of the *Dialogues*. Both Gregory and Paul (who expands Gregory's account) record the destruction of the monastery at Monte Cassino sometime after the Lombard invasion of Italy in 568.[32] Later in his *History*, Paul explains that the site lay abandoned until the reign of Pope Gregory II (715–31), who sent Petronax of Brescia to refound the monastery in 717. There were already some 'honest men' (*simplices viri*) dwelling there who submitted to the spiritual care of Petronax; together they built a new monastery. Though Paul says that from the outset they lived 'under the yoke of the holy rule and by the teaching of blessed Benedict', he also notes that it was Pope Zacharias (741–52) who gave to Petronax various manuscripts and other useful items, among them 'the rule that the blessed father Benedict wrote with his own holy hands'.[33] Though this has traditionally been understood to mean a gift of the autograph of the *RB*, that is, a treasured artefact, rather than a first *traditio* of observance of the *RB*, it is reasonable to question whether Petronax restored 'Benedictine' monasticism to Monte Cassino (in the absence of clearer proof of earlier ties between the *RB* and Monte Cassino) or established a cenobium at Monte Cassino that followed the prescriptions of the *RB* from its founding.

The first definite signals of the importance of the *RB* elsewhere are in episcopal charters for monasteries from the 630s, with reference to observance of the *Regula Benedicti et Columbani*, some sort of hybrid between the *RB* and the *Regula Monachorum* of Columbanus (ca. 540–615).[34] Columbanus' *Rule* and other writings, heavily influenced by Jerome, Cassian and Basil, placed a great emphasis on ascetic discipline and edification. The so-called 'mixed rule' (*regula mixta*) – associated particularly with the Irish foundations emanating from Luxeuil and Bobbio – combined spiritual and organizational content from the *RB* with Columbanus' *Rule* and other sources.[35] Few of these mixed rules have survived in written form. Those that have are for monastic women (though written by men): the *Rule* of Donatus of Besançon (d. 660) and the contemporary *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*

[30] Ed. Ludwig Traube, *Textgeschichte der Regula S. Benedicti*, 2nd edn, Abhandlungen der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse 25.2 (München: Verlag der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenchaften, 1910), pp. 87–8.

[31] Diem, 'Inventing the Holy Rule', 67.

[32] *Dial.* 2.17; *Hist. Lang*. 4.17 (ed. Waitz, *MGH SRL*, 122).

[33] *Hist. Lang*. 6.40 (ed. Waitz, *MGH SRL*, 178–9).

[34] Diem, 'Inventing the Holy Rule', 64–70, based on the charters gathered and studied by Eugen Ewig in vol. 2 of *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973)*, ed. Hartmut Atsma, Beihefte der Francia 3 (München: Artemis Verlag, 1976–79).

[35] See Josef Semmler, 'Le monachisme occidental du VIIIe au XIe siècle: Formation et réformation', *Revue Bénédictine* 103 (1993), pp. 68–89, at 76–7.

wrongly attributed to Waldebert of Luxeuil (d. 668).[36] Donatus' *Rule* is a particularly important witness as it contains extensive extracts from the *RB*, which constitute 43 of its 77 chapters. This is possibly the earliest known actual quotation of the *RB*.[37] The oldest known manuscript of the *RB* itself, Oxford MS. Hatton 48, is usually dated to around 710 and belongs to the same textual tradition as the extracts found in the *Regula Donati*.[38]

The paucity of manuscript examples of *regulae mixtae* suggests that the deployment of multiple literary sources is better understood as a 'mixed observance' rather than a 'mixed rule', lest one suggest that such practices were normally concretized in fixed documents (at least for the men).[39] It is more likely a matter of flexible application of received monastic experience than of drafting legislation. One finds parallels in late-seventh-century England, with the *RB*'s guidelines for abbatial selection, for example, applied at Wearmouth and Jarrow in an era before the monasteries were bound to a single rule.[40] Such selective adaptation of existing texts was foreseen by Benedict himself in his recognition that the norms of his own rule were subject to adaptation and revision by later users (*RB* 18.22). In his final chapter, Benedict points his more zealous monks to the '*Conferences* of the Fathers and their *Institutes* and *Lives*, and the rule of our holy father Basil' for further guidance on monastic perfection (*RB* 73.5).[41] The *RB* itself was never understood by its author to be a self-contained monastic charter, complete in itself and immutable: such had been the folly of the Master, whose *Rule* would have sunk without a trace had Benedict not salvaged it.[42]

The 'Second Benedict' and the new monastic normal

The growing prominence of the *RB* in the mixed-observance monasteries both on the Continent and in England, perhaps helped by its perceived Roman links and the

[36] For Donatus, see Michaela Zelzer, 'Die Regula Donati, der älteste Textzeuge der Regula Benedicti', *Regulae Benedicti Studia* 16 (1987), pp. 23–36; on the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, see Albrecht Diem, 'Das Ende des monastischen Experiments. Liebe, Beichte und Schweigen in der *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* (mit einer Übersetzung im Anhang)', in Gert Melville and Anne Müller (eds.), *Female vita religiosa between Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages. Structures, developments and spatial contexts*, Vita Regularis, Abhandlungen 47 (Münster/Berlin: LIT-Verlag, 2011), pp. 81–136. Diem is also preparing a new edition.

[37] If the *Commentary on First Kings* attributed to Gregory the Great is actually a later composition (see note 28).

[38] See the discussion in Vogüé's introduction to *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, Sources Chrétiennes 181 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971), pp. 338–9, as well as in Klaus Zelzer, 'Von Benedikt zu Hildemar', *Regulae Benedicti Studia* 16 (1987), pp. 1–22.

[39] As argued by Diem, 'Inventing the Holy Rule'.

[40] Zelzer, 'Von Benedikt zu Hildemar', p. 11.

[41] The first two are generally taken to refer to Cassian's *Collationes* and *Instituta*, both of which are presented as the teaching of Egyptian monastic elders rather than as Cassian's own work; *Vitae patrum* was the generic term for collections of monastic hagiography, of sayings, etc.

[42] The *RM* ends with a chapter on the enclosure of the monastery and the importance of a good lock on the gate (*RM* 95.22-23); the reading during meals in the refectory was to consist solely of the *RM* itself (*RM* 24), which is presented throughout as a divinely dictated law allowing little room for other voices or for revision.

impetus of a newly emergent liturgical cult of Benedict propagated, along with *RB* itself, from the restored monastery at Monte Cassino from the mid-eighth century, helped make it an obvious choice for the Frankish reform of monasticism begun by Pippin III ('the Short', d. 768) and realized most fully under Louis the Pious (d. 840) and his monastic agent, the 'second Benedict', of Aniane (d. 821).[43]

The eventual dominance of the *RB* should not obscure three important points. First, even the Carolingian exaltation of the *RB* placed it within a tradition of monastic legislation that both preceded and succeeded the *RB*. Immersion in monastic sources was an integral part of Benedict of Aniane's reform, though always with the goal of underscoring the primacy of the *RB*. According to Ardo's *Life* of Benedict of Aniane, at their morning gathering (*collecta* or *capitulum*) the monks heard readings from other monastic rules (as gathered by Benedict of Aniane in his *Codex regularum*), complementing their evening reading from patristic homilies. To explain and defend the actual teachings of the *RB*, he created a second compilation, with testimonies extracted from other rules arranged according to the chapters of the *RB*. This *Concordia regularum* demonstrated the traditional underpinnings of the *RB*, justifying its selection as the basis for reform of the monasteries by presenting it as the culmination of a deep and wide tradition.[44] Just as the *RB* prescribed evening reading from Cassian's *Conferences* or the *Lives of the Fathers*,[45] as well as regular readings from patristic commentaries on scripture at Vigils (*RB* 9.8; cf. 73.4), so the 'second Benedict' also sought to form his monks in a culture of monastic practice and traditional biblical interpretation. The difference was that now the *RB* itself had become the lens through which to view the received monastic literature.

Second, by the time the *RB* was deployed in new ways in the eighth and ninth centuries, it was an antique text. To bear the burden placed upon it, the *RB* required supplementing and explaining to adapt it to new social and religious conditions as well as to accommodate now-routine monastic practices not mentioned in the *RB*. Among the former were the increasingly clericalized membership of monasteries and daily celebration of the Eucharist, both tied to the sacramental economy of offering Masses for the dead. The routine practices not envisaged in *RB* included the daily 'chapter' meeting after Prime and various devotional accretions.[46] Monastic 'customaries' (*consuetudines*) described and prescribed the practices particular to a monastery or group of monasteries. Commentaries began to be written on the *RB*, which had become a received text worthy of gloss and interpretation (and

[43] Josef Semmler, 'Benedictus II: una regula - una consuetudo', in Willem Lourdaux (ed.), *Benedictine culture 750–1050*, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia 1/11 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983), pp. 1–49, and 'Le monachisme occidental du VIIIe au XIe siècle: Formation et réformation', *Revue Bénédictine* 103 (1993), pp. 68–89. Cf. Diem, 'Inventing the Holy Rule', pp. 70–7.

[44] As described in ch. 38 of Ardo's, 'Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis et Indensis', in Georg Waitz (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores 15.1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1887), pp. 200–20, at 217. See M.E. Bouillet, 'Le vrai «Codex regularum» de saint Benoît d'Aniane', *Revue Bénédictine* 75 (1965), pp. 345–9; and *Benedicti Anianensis Concordia Regularum*, ed. Pierre Bonnerue, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 168–168A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999). See also Semmler, 'Benedictus II: una regula - una consuetudo', p. 27.

[45] *RB* 42.3 and 5. Though the text does not name Cassian, it is generally presumed that *Collationes* both here and in ch. 73.5 (where it is joined by *Instituta*) denotes his work.

[46] For examples, see Semmler, 'Benedictus II: una regula - una consuetudo', pp. 30–2.

because of its antiquity, requiring explanation of obscure points). Customaries and commentaries allowed a new kind of 'mixed observance' in putatively Benedictine monasteries, providing the flexibility necessary for local application of a fixed norm and allowing room for the inevitable evolution of monastic practice. For the modern reader, customaries and commentaries are privileged sources of information about spiritual and liturgical practices.[47] In the context of western monastic history, their importance lies in the fact that even as various reforms arose and fell back, the pattern established in the Frankish imposition of *RB* along with tools for its application and interpretation would become the model for later efforts to reform the monastic *ordo* in the western church.

Finally, despite the official imposition of the *RB* as the monastic norm in the Frankish kingdom, it was after all only one part of the Latin world. And even there, many ancient monasteries, among them those founded by Martin at Marmoutier and Tours, chose to maintain their own observances rather than submit to the demands of the *RB*. They could do so by opting for the alternative form of religious life permitted under the increasingly binary limits of Frankish law, that of canons (*sub ordine canonico*).[48] With life in community and the celebration of public liturgical offices, they were monks by any measure except the one that became the sole standard. The most famous rule for canons, that of Chrodegang of Metz (d. 766), borrowed heavily from the *RB* even as it specified – and in so doing perhaps widened – the key differences between the *ordo monachorum* and the *ordo canonicorum*.[49]

Conclusion

This wide-angle view of the formative centuries of the Christian monastic tradition may suggest that any thought of a coherent narrative must now be cast aside in the face of a highly complex, contextual and contingent historical reality. In one sense it is indeed fair to conclude that there is no single 'story' that can be told beginning with Antony in Egypt and then moving in great arcs across Christian east and west. But we monks and nuns have always known that the story was not one of continuous or smooth ascent, whether from Egypt or from Monte Cassino, even if we have believed there was a narrative more coherent than that suggested here. The motto of Monte Cassino is *succisa virescit*: in addition to the destruction in the late sixth century mentioned earlier, the monastery was destroyed again in 883 by the Saracens

[47] E.g., the remarkable mid-ninth century *Expositio Regulae* (*Tractatus in Regulam*) of Hildemar, monk of Corbie (d. 850), which survives in the form of detailed notes left by his students: ed. Ruppert Mittermüller, *Expositio Regulae ab Hildemaro tradita* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1880). See Klaus Zelzer, 'Überlegungen zu einer Gesamtedition des frühnachkarolingischen Kommentars zur Regula S. Benedicti aus der Tradition des Hildemar von Corbie', *Revue Bénédictine* 91 (1981), pp. 373–82, and now the richly annotated online presentation of the Latin text and English translation at http://www.hildemar.org/.

[48] Semmler, 'Benedictus II: una regula - una consuetudo', pp. 3–28.

[49] M. A. Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the Regula Canonicorum in the Eighth Century*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4th ser., 61 (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

and abandoned for some years, and then bombed to ruins in February 1944 by Allied forces. 'Cut it back, it still grows!': the same motto, with its illustration by a tree stump from which new shoots emerge, is painted on the wall of our monastic refectory in Minnesota. The discoveries of the past century, now being assimilated into broader understanding of monastic history, demonstrate the genius of a spiritual movement capable of reinvention in wildly different times and places. May it always be so.

2

Not by Bread Alone: St Brendan Meets Paul, the Irish Spiritual Hermit (*Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, Chapter xxvi)

Éamonn Ó Carragáin

In Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, St Brendan, abbot of Clonfert, and the Irish monks who crew his boat, come to the island where they meet Paul, a hermit as Irish as themselves.[1] Both in Ireland and in Britain, Saints Paul and Anthony of Egypt were revered as the first monks, and there is no evidence that the author of the *Navigatio* does not share in this reverence.[2] His Spiritual Hermit ('Paulum eremitam spiritalem')[3] is not invented as an Irish rival to St Paul of Thebes,

[1] The present study expands, corrects and updates the discussion of Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio* in my article 'The Meeting of Saint Paul and Saint Anthony: Visual and Literary Uses of a Eucharistic Motif', pp. 1–58 in Gearóid Mac Niocaill and Patrick F. Wallace (eds.), *Keimelia: Studies in Medieval Archaeology and History in Memory of Tom Delaney* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1988), pp. 31–8. I offer this updated version to Sr Benedicta to recall a fortunate encounter: some 20 years ago, she invited the late Canon Donald Allchin and me to dinner at her flat in Beaumont Street. During the meal, I told my two friends that a famous Collect for 25 March, 'Gratiam tuam', which seems to come from St Peter's in the Vatican in the 670s, might possibly have been composed by the then precentor of St Peter's, John the Archcantor. Canon Allchin suddenly asked Sr Benedicta whether she had to hand a copy of the Book of Common Prayer: of course she did. He then brilliantly discussed the translations Thomas Cranmer had made of 'Gratiam tuam' and other ancient prayers. In the Sarum Missal, Cranmer had come to know the prayer as a Postcommunion prayer. With the instinct of a great liturgist, he had reinstated 'Gratiam tuam' as the Collect for the Annunciation, its original Vatican use. Cranmer cannot have known that the Collect was composed for the Vatican basilica, possibly by the archcantor and abbot who had come to teach the liturgy of St Peter's in seventh-century Northumbria. As a direct result of that discussion, I added an Epilogue to my *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical images and the Old English Poems of the 'Dream of the Rood' Tradition* (London and Toronto: British Library Press and Toronto University Press 2005, pp. 355–71) to trace some of the history of these prayers, in Anglican and in Roman Catholic uses, down to modern times.

[2] Quotations from the *Navigatio* are from Carl Selmer, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis: From early Latin Manuscripts* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959); translations from the *Navigatio* are based on J. F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, trans., *The Age of Bede* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1965; repr. 1998), but with many silent changes to make the translation more literal. For discussions of the cult of Saints Paul and Anthony in Northumbria, in Wales, and in Ireland, see A. M. Allchin, *Celtic Christianity, Fact or Fantasy? An Inaugural Lecture, University College of North Wales, Bangor, 16 March 1993* (UCNWB, 1993), pp. 11–12 (I am grateful to Dr Richard Hawtree for this reference); Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting' pp. 31–2; and Id., 'Ruthwell and Iona: the Meeting of St Paul and St Anthony Revisited', pp. 138–44 in Marion Meek (ed.), *The Modern Traveller to our Past: Festschrift in Honour of Ann Hamlin* (Gretton, Northants: DPK, 2006).

[3] Selmer, *Navigatio*, p. 70, Chapter xxvi, line 8.

the first monk. Instead, the *Navigatio* proposes a theology, more developed than that of St Jerome who wrote the *Vita* of the Egyptian saint, of how a hermit can contribute to communal monastic life.[4] The Irish hermit finds his island hermitage in obedience to his abbot St Patrick; over many years, he comes to see the island of his hermitage as itself an icon of Christ's presence. However, this icon is only made fully real when a second Irish founder-abbot, St Brendan, arrives on the island, and hermit and abbot each publicly affirms, in the presence of St Brendan's monks, the graces the other has received.[5] Then, the Spiritual Hermit provides nourishment, from the transformed island landscape, for St Brendan and his companions on the next stage of their voyage.

The *Navigatio* sets forth a developed theology of spiritual reciprocity between abbots, hermit and community, by rewriting St Jerome's account of the meeting of St Paul the first hermit and St Anthony the Abbot: it is, in effect, a witty, though not irreverent, parody of Jerome. In my earlier study of Chapter xxvi, I used a musical analogy, suggesting that Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio* interacts 'as it were in a form of counterpoint, with the corresponding details in the *Vita Sancti Pauli*; . . . to appreciate the sophisticated virtuosity of the *Navigatio,* it is necessary to have some recollection of the *Vita*'.[6] No doubt the author of the *Navigatio* felt that he could rely on his monastic readership for such recollection. He may have appreciated that Jerome had composed his *Vita Pauli Primi Eremitae* in counterpoint to Athanasius' famous *Vita Sancti Antonii Primi Abbatis*, in order to emphasize that the fundamental impulse in monasticism was eremitic rather than cenobitic. Jerome's reworking of the *Vita Antonii* has recently been termed a *contrafactum.* Like 'counterpoint', the term *contrafactum* has its origins in musical scholarship, and refers to the use of secular themes in religious music.[7] Jerome's *Vita Pauli* makes it perfectly clear that (to compose a modern *contrafactum* on a Rodgers and Hammerstein lyric) 'Oh, the hermit and the abbot should be friends'; but that the hermit came first, and that his heroism is admired, his rough clothing imitated, and his praises spread, by the abbot.[8] The *Navigatio* remakes that encounter to show even more clearly that hermit, abbots and community are each nourished by the others' charisms.

The happy encounter between St Brendan and Paul the Irish Spiritual Hermit in Chapter xxvi contrasts sharply with the preceding three chapters (xxiii–xxv), which form a unified group. After the halls of ice of Chapter xxii, we move to mountains of hidden, and visible, fire: those chapters all draw on descriptions of northern

[4] Quotations from Jerome's *Vita Pauli* are taken from Pierre Leclerc, Edgardo Martin Morales and Adalbert de Vogüé, edd., *Jérôme: Trois vies de moines (Paul, Malchus et Hilarion)* (Sources chrétiennes, 508) (Paris: Cerf, 2007); translations from Carolinne White, *Early Christian Lives* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998).

[5] Selmer, *Navigatio*, p. 72, lines 38–48.

[6] É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting', p. 37.

[7] See Eleonora Vincenti, *Contrafacta: allusioni, modelli, rescritture da San Girolamo a Pietro Aretino* (Studi e Ricerche, 96) (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2011). Vincenti discusses Jerome's parody of the *Vita Antonii*, giving a full and useful survey of earlier discussion, on pp. 15–48; see also S. J. Davis, 'Jerome's *Life of Paul* and the Promotion of Egyptian Monasticism in the West', pp. 25–41 in William Lyster (ed.), *The Cave Church of Paul the Hermit at the Monastery of St Paul, Egypt* (New Haven and London: American Research Center in Egypt and Yale University Press, 2008), though this work is weak on the early medieval insular evidence.

[8] See Vincenti, *Contrafacta,* pp. 35–9.

(Icelandic?) volcanoes. Volcanoes implied that hell is physically and spiritually close at hand.[9] These terrifying landscapes thus have eschatological implications: in them, three of the four last things (death, judgement, hell) become central to the poem's narrative. It is only with Chapter xxvi that we are shown an icon of the fourth: we come to see that union with Christ (a foretaste of heaven) is even nearer, to the individual and to the community, than hell and its demons.

As soon as the Irish monks catch sight of the island of the infernal smiths (Chapter xxiii), Brendan feels uneasy: he does not wish to land, nor even to approach the island.[10] In spite of Brendan, the wind takes the boat straight towards it, willy-nilly. It is only when the boat is so close that the din of demonic forges can already be heard that Brendan protects himself and his companions from landing, by making the sign of Christ's victory towards the four cardinal points ('armauit se dominico tropheo in quattuor partes')[11] and by an explicit prayer to Christ for deliverance ('Domine, Jhesu Christe, libera nos de hac insula').[12] The island is quite without grass and trees ('ualde rusticam, saxosam atque scoriosam, sine arboribus et herba'[13]: when we find such a landscape again in Chapter xxvi the naked rock will not be a threat, but a symbol of Christ's presence). This terrifying island is dotted with slag-heaps and forges, and one of the island's smiths, 'a very swarthy, evil-looking man, with a bright red face',[14] hurls a piece of slag at Brendan's boat. As the monks flee, a whole army of demon-smiths attack them, throwing slag at them. Fortunately for the survival of Brendan's crew, the smiths are driven by hatred and strife among themselves as much as by hostility towards the Irish monks: some threw slag into the sea after the servants of God, but others threw the slag at each other.[15]

In Chapter xxiv, the theme of compulsion intensifies. One of the three monks who had followed Brendan out of the monastery is overcome by demonic possession. He suddenly leaps overboard, onto another volcano-like island. As Brendan and his crew sail away towards the south, they see the mountain vomiting forth flames: the demons, together with their captive Irish monk, are burning in the underground fires. The sequence of three infernal visions reaches its climax 7 days later, in Chapter xxv, when Brendan and his companions encounter Judas Iscariot, 'of all plotters the most wretched' ('Ego sum infelicissimus Judas atque negociator pessimus').[16] It is clear that these three islands are linked up underground, because Judas tells his Irish visitors that he was present when their brother was swallowed up. The mountain had vomited massive flames, as though to express its joy: that, Judas explains, is what it usually does when it swallows damned souls. Horrible though this third island is, for Judas himself

> this is no place of punishment. It is the spot where my loving Saviour grants me respite in honour of his Resurrection (for that day was the Lord's day). Sitting

[9] See Thomas O'Loughlin, *Adomnán and the Holy Places* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2007), pp. 133–44.
[10] Selmer, *Navigatio*, p. 61, lines 4–5.
[11] Id., pp. 61–2, lines 8–9.
[12] Id., p. 62, lines 9–10.
[13] Id., p. 61, lines 1–3.
[14] Id., p. 62, lines 12–13.
[15] Id., p. 63, lines 26–28.
[16] Id., p. 66, Chapter xxv, lines 18–19.

> here is like being in the Garden of Delights, compared to the torments to which I can look forward this evening. My punishment is to burn like a lump of molten lead in a crucible, day and night, in the middle of yonder mountain, the home of Leviathan and his allies. . . . . I come here to find respite from first to second vespers of every Sunday, from Christmas to Epiphany, from Easter to Whitsun, and on the feasts of the Purification and the Assumption of the Mother of God ["Meum uero refrigerium habeo hic omni die dominico a uespera usque ad uesperam, et in Natiuitate Domini usque in Theophaniam et a Pascha usque in Pentecosten et in Purificacione Dei Genitricis atque Assumpcione"].[17]

Judas' respite is granted in honour of Sunday, and hence of the Resurrection. Because in the next chapter (xxvi) Brendan and his company will be told how they will spend Lent, this present encounter with Judas (Chapter xxv) must have taken place on a midwinter Sunday, after Christmas and before Epiphany. Judas begs Brendan to lengthen his respite, from vesper-time on Sunday (when, liturgically speaking, Sunday ended) until Monday morning, and Brendan agrees. This act of mercy enrages the demons, especially because, as they explain towards dawn, during that Sunday night their prince, Satan, had flogged them savagely for not returning Judas after vesper-time, on time for his tortures. After a vivid altercation with the enraged demons, Brendan sets off with his crew towards the south.

At the beginning of Chapter xxvi, references to time are deceptive. We are told that the little island of Paul the Spiritual Hermit appeared to Brendan and his companions 'far off to the south, on the third day' ('Tercia uero die apparuit illis quaedam insula parua contra meridiem procul').[18] This is difficult to reconcile with the end of the chapter, where we will learn that the encounter with Paul the Hermit took place at the beginning of Lent: that penitential season would not begin until at least 5 weeks after Epiphany. But the phrase 'tercia uero die' recalls the credal clause proclaiming Christ's Resurrection ('On the third day he arose again from the dead'). References to 'the third day' echo through this chapter and the next. Brendan tells his crew that they can take things easy, and not to row too hard in case they tire themselves out: after all, Easter, which is soon to come ('hoc Pascha quod uenturum erit cito'),[19] will mark the seventh anniversary of their leaving Ireland. Time is telescoped to enable us to move smoothly from the infernal landscapes of the preceding chapters to positive images of Christ's presence.

Brendan gives a brief, though prophetic, summary of what lies ahead for his monks:

> In a short time you will meet Paul the Spiritual Hermit [Paulum eremitam spiritalem]. He has lived on that island for the past sixty years without any physical food ["sine ullo uictu corporali"]. Before that, he used to get food from some kind of animal ["a quadam bestia"].[20]

[17] Id., p. 63, lines 29–32.
[18] Id., p. 70, lines 1–3.
[19] Id., p. 71, line 11.
[20] Id., pp. 70–1, lines 8–11.

The name 'Paul' was evidently designed to recall the Egyptian Paul the Hermit. Indeed, some modern scholars have simply identified 'Paul the Spiritual Hermit' of the *Navigatio* with his Egyptian namesake.[21] But the adjective 'spiritalis' recalls the writings of an even more authoritative namesake of the Irish hermit. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St Paul of Tarsus had discussed the resurrection of the body in terms which posit a progression from what is 'animale' to what is 'spiritale':

> So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption: it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour: it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness: it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body: it shall rise a spiritual body [seminatur corpus animale | surgit corpus spiritale]. If there be a natural body, there is also a spiritual body [si est corpus animale | est et spiritale], as it is written: The first Adam was made into a living soul: the last Adam into a quickening spirit [factus est Adam in animam viventem | novissimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem]. Yet that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is animal: afterwards that which is spiritual [sed non prius quod spiritale est | sed quod animale est | deinde quod spiritale]. . . . . Therefore, as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly.[22]

The concept 'spiritalis' provides one key to the parody of Jerome's *Vita Pauli* in Chapter xxvi. The most famous characteristic of the Egyptian Paul was that he was, like the prophet Elijah,[23] nourished by bread from heaven. A raven brought him half a loaf each day, and when St Anthony came to visit him in his hermitage, the raven doubled the rations to a whole loaf.[24] The motif of heaven-sent bread was perfectly familiar to the author of the *Navigatio*: in Chapter xii, when Brendan and his companions reach the island-monastery of St Ailbe, the narrative of the *Navigatio* is clearly modelled on that of Jerome's *Vita Pauli*.[25] The 24 monks of St Ailbe's island community drink water from

[21] Selmer, *Navigatio*, p. 91 and note 92, simply identifies the hermit of Chapter xxvi as the Egyptian Paul: 'Paul, *primus eremita,* in conformity with the Irish equivalent of a desert, is placed on a deserted island in the Atlantic'. Selmer is followed by later scholars, for example, by Patricia M. Rumsey, *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland. The Monks of the Navigatio and the Céli Dé in Dialogue to Explore the Theologies of Time and the Liturgy of the Hours in Pre-Viking Ireland* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2007), p. 10, note 68: 'A favourite figure in early Ireland; he appears on several High Crosses in the company of Antony, "Father of monks"'; see also p. 85, note 102. Notwithstanding this small slip, Rumsey's book is an invaluable guide to liturgical references in the *Navigatio*. Joannes Orlandi, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani.* Vol. 1: *Introduzione* [the only volume published] (Milan and Varese: Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1968, pp. 110–13), provided a brief but more sophisticated statement of the relationship between Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio* and Jerome's *Vita Pauli*; further discussion of sources and analogues for Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio* can be found in Clara Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint: Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-Century* Voyage of Saint Brendan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 48–9, 120, 147, and in Jude S. Mackley, *The Legend of St Brendan: A Comparative Study of the Latin and Anglo-Norman Versions* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 214–22.

[22] 1 Cor. 15.42-49. Quotations of the Vulgate from *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem,* ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, fourth edition, 1994); English quotations from *The Holy Bible* [Douay-Rheims] (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1914), with occasional silent changes to bring it even closer to the Latin.

[23] I Kgs 17.6; see Leclerc et al., *Jérôme: Trois vies,* pp. 166–7, note 5.

[24] Chapter 11, par. 1: Leclerc et al., *Jérôme: trois vies,* p. 168.

[25] On St Ailbe and his cult, see Tomás O'Sullivan, 'The Miraculous Production of Water from Rock and the Impact of Exegesis on Early Irish Hagiography', *Eolas: the Journal of the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies* 3 (2009), pp. 19–50 (at pp. 38–42).

a clear spring at their communal meal, and, like the Egyptian St Paul, are providentially provided with bread, getting an additional loaf on Sundays and feast days.[26] No raven appears to them: 'Where the bread comes from . . . is unknown to us. All we know is that God, in his kindness, sends it to us by one of His creatures': this is a monastic community after all, not solitary hermits like Elijah or Paul of Thebes. A double ration of bread is provided when the Irish monks arrive. The phrase of the *Navigatio*, 'and now, on your arrival, we have been given double rations' ['Modo in aduentu uestro duplicem annonam habemus'],[27] clearly echoes the account of the meeting of St Anthony and St Paul in Jerome 'in honour of your arrival Christ has doubled his soldiers' rations' ['uerum ad aduentum tuum, militibus suis Christus duplicauit annonam.'].[28]

If Chapter xii describes an ideal monastery, Chapter xxvi describes, not the ideal hermitage (where food would of course be needed): instead, a landscape which shows that hermits are important because they attend fully to the 'one thing needful' (Lk. 10.42), the divine presence made manifest in Christ. St Brendan's initial description of Paul, that he has lived for 60 years 'without any bodily sustenance' ('sine ullu uictu corporali') directs us once more to I Corinthians, in this case to the 'spiritual food' ('escam spiritalem') which fed the Israelites in the desert:

> . . . our fathers were all under the cloud: and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud and in the sea: And did all eat the same spiritual food: and all drank the same spiritual drink: and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ [et omnes eandem escam spiritalem manducaverunt | et omnes eundem potum spiritalem biberunt | bibebant autem de spiritali consequenti eos petra | petra autem erat Christus].[29]

The island of the *Navigatio*, bare rock from which water springs, clearly refers to St Paul's phrase, 'and that rock was Christ'.[30] This island is difficult to land on, because it is as high as it is broad.[31] It is very small: just a stadium, less than 200 metres, in circumference:

> Cum autem appropinquassent ad litus, minime poterant aditum inuenire pre altitudine ripe illius. Erat autem parua et nimis rotunda illa insula quasi unius stadii. De terra uero nihil habuit desuper, sed petra nuda in modum silicis apparuit. Quantum erat latitudinis et longitudinis, tantum et altitudinis.[32]
>
> When they got close to the shore, they found it impossible to land because the cliffs were so high. It was small, and perfectly round, and about a stadium in

[26] Selmer, p. 32, Chapter xii, lines 57–59.
[27] Ibid., lines 60–61.
[28] Leclerc et al., *Jérôme: trois vies,* ch. 10, p. 166, lines 13–15.
[29] 1 Cor. 10.1-4.
[30] See O'Sullivan, 'The Miraculous Production of Water from Stone', especially pp. 44–6 on Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio.*
[31] Not nearly as difficult as landing on St Ailbe's island, in Chapter xii (Selmer, p. 29, lines 5–12); this relative ease presumably reflects the spiritual progress made by St Brendan's crew in the meantime.
[32] Selmer, p. 71, lines 11–16.

> circumference. It had no soil on top, just naked flint-like rock. It was just as high as it was long and broad.

The phrase 'latitudinis et longitudinis' ('breadth and length') seems clumsy at first reading: if the island is perfectly round ('nimis rotunda'), there can be no distinction between its length and its breadth. But by using three words (length, breadth and height) to emphasize its three-dimensionality, the *Navigatio* hints that the tiny island has something about it of the Heavenly Jerusalem, where 'longitudo et latitudo et altitudo eius aequalia sunt' ('the length and the height and the breadth thereof are equal').[33] It is a foretaste only: the vast Heavenly Jerusalem will be foursquare, not round (Rev. 21.16), and made not of rock but of gold and precious stones. It will have 12 gates, 3 to each side; but it is only when the Irish monks have circled the hermit's island that they discern a tiny break in its perfect roundness:

> Cum autem circuissent nauigando illam insulam, inuenerunt portum strictum ita ut proram nauicule uix capere potuisset, et ascensum difficillimum ad ascendendum. Tum sanctus Brendanus dixit fratribus suis: "Expectate hic donec reuertar ad uos. Non licet autem uobis intrare sine licencia uiri Dei qui commoratur in hoc loco."[34]
>
> When they had sailed round that island, they came upon a narrow harbour, barely wide enough to let the prow of the boat pass through. The way to the top was very difficult to climb. Then St Brendan said to his brethren: "Wait here until I return to you. You are not allowed to land without the permission of the Man of God who dwells in this place."

The 'narrow harbour' ('portum strictum') puns on 'the narrow gate' ('angustam portam') of Matthew 7.13: 'Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.'[35] The difficult climb to the top recalls the difficult path to the heights of contemplation. The most famous meditation on the stages of achieving contemplation was the Gradual Psalms or Songs of Ascents

[33] Rev. 21.16.

[34] Selmer, p. 71, lines 17–21.

[35] 'Angustam portam' is found both in the Vulgate and in the Old Latin text of Sankt Gallen Cod. 50, p. 51 (online facsimile at www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0050/5, consulted 20 July 2013). The *Navigatio* probably uses the variant 'strictum' here because it has already used 'angustus' when describing the difficult landing on St Ailbe's island: Chapter xii, p. 29, lines 10–12: 'apparuit illis portus angustus, tantum unius nauis receptio' ('a narrow harbour appeared to them, just big enough to take a single boat'). For a famous use of the 'portum/portam' pun, see Venantius Fortunatus, 'Pange lingua', Stanza 10 (the final stanza) where the Cross is seen as a ship carrying (Christ) the world's ransom (line 1), then as a sailor ['nauta'], preparing a port ('portum') for a shipwrecked world (line 2), and finally as [the door-posts] sprinkled by the sacred blood poured from the lamb's body (line 3: cf. Exod. 12.7, 22). To make sense, the 'portum' ('port') of line 2 has to be re-supplied in line 3 as an implied 'portam' ('door = doorposts') sprinkled with blood: 'Sola digna tu fuisti ferre pretium saeculi | Atque portum praeparare nauta mundo naufrago | quem sacer cruor perunxit fusus agni corpore'. For the hymn, see *One Hundred Latin Hymns, Ambrose to Aquinas,* ed. and trans. Peter G. Walsh and Christopher Husch; Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 18 (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, and London, 2012), No. 20, and notes on pp. 422–4 (where however the implied pun is not noticed).

(Ps. 119–33 in the Vulgate, 120–34 in the Hebrew numbering).[36] The author of the *Navigatio* was certainly familiar with this set of psalms: on the Island of Steadfast Men (Chapter xvii), the monastic community had sung the Gradual Psalms together.[37] Appropriately, at the summit the Spiritual Hermit greets Brendan with 'Ecce quam bonum et quam iocundum habitare fratres in unum'[38] ('Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity'), the opening of the fourteenth (penultimate) Gradual Psalm. This psalm was seen to celebrate the fraternal unity that should reign in monastic communities; indeed, St Augustine had seen the psalm as having 'begotten' monasteries: here, the hermit welcomes the abbot and his community.[39]

The meeting of St Brendan and the Spiritual Hermit is set within a symbolic landscape: this shows, once more, that the *Navigatio* is composed in counterpoint to Jerome's *Vita Pauli*:

> Cum autem uenerabilis pater peruenisset ad summitatem illius insule, uidit duas speluncas, ostium contra ostium, in latere insule contra ortum solis, ac fontem paruissimum, rotundum in modum patule, surgentem de petra ante ostium spelunce ubi miles Christi residebat. At ubi surgebat predictus fons, statim petra sorbebat illum. Sanctus uero Brendanus cum appropinquasset ad ostium spelunce unius, de altera egressus est senex foras obuiam sibi, dicens: "Ecce quam bonum et quam iocundum habitare fratres in unum."[40]
>
> When the venerable father [Brendan] had arrived at the summit of that island, he saw two caves, the mouth of one facing the mouth of the other, on the side of the island which faced the sun's rising; and a tiny fountain, round like a plate, springing from the rock before the mouth of the cave in which the soldier of Christ lived. When the fountain sprang from the rock, the rock immediately re-absorbed it. As soon as St Brendan got to the mouth of one cave, the old man came out of the other, saying: "How good and pleasant it is for brothers to live in unity."

The two matching caves solve a structural problem in the narrative of Chapter xxvi. The most famous tableau in Jerome's *Vita Pauli* was the moment when Paul the hermit and Anthony the abbot settled how to break the heavenly bread:

[36] See the extensive discussions of the term 'canticum graduum' by Augustine, in his sermons on this set of psalms: *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* eds. Eligius Dekkers and Joannes Fraipont, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* XL (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956), pp. 1780–937, especially the sentence 'Et quis est iste mons quo adscendimus, nisi Dominus Iesus Christus?' (p. 1777, lines 30–31); Maria Boulding, with John E. Rotelle and Michael Fiedrowicz, trans., *Saint Augustine: Expositions of the Psalms*, 6 vols (New York: New City Press, 2000–04), vol. 5, pp. 497–526; vol. 6, pp. 13–189, especially 'Who is the mountain? Who else but our Lord Jesus?', vol. 5, p. 498. On the Gradual Psalms in Irish tradition, see Martin McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 187, 214, 231–3, 329–36.

[37] Selmer, p. 51, line 32: 'et quindecim gradus cantabant sedendo', 'and they sang the fifteen Gradual Psalms while seated'.

[38] Ps. 132.1 (Iuxta LXX) (Hebrew numbering, 133:1); Selmer, p. 72, lines 28–29.

[39] 'Ista enim uerba psalterii, iste dulce sonus, ista suauis melodia tam in cantico quam in intellectu, etiam monasteria peperit': *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* eds. Dekkers and Fraipont, p. 1927; 'Those words of the psalm, this lovely sound, this song equally sweet as a melody sung or a message understood, has given birth to monasteries': *Expositions of the Psalms,* trans. Boulding et al., vol. 6, p. 175.

[40] Selmer, p. 71, lines 22–29.

> When they had given thanks to the Lord, they both sat down at the edge of a spring as clear as glass. Here a dispute arose as to which of them should break the bread and they continued to argue until the day had almost turned to evening. Paul argued that it was the custom for the guest to do so, while Antony countered with the rights of age. At last it was decided that they should hold the bread at each end, and then if each one pulled towards himself, he would keep the bit left in his hands ["Tandem consilium fuit, ut adprehenso e regione pane, dum ad se quisque nititur, pars sua remaneret in manibus"]. Then they bent over the spring and drank a little of the water, and offering to God a sacrifice of praise, they passed the night in prayer.[41]

In Jerome's tableau, the two monks sit together, so that their seated bodies flank the loaf which they break between them. The *Navigatio* now creates a tableau in which no bread will be broken; instead the round fountain is central. The two flanking caves provide an intriguing visual setting for the fountain, a puzzle only resolved when, 60 years later, Abbot Brendan stands in front of one cave and is recognized and greeted by the Hermit Paul who emerges from the other. Irish tradition saw dark places like caves as appropriate settings for the meditative concentration needed to compose stories and poetry.[42] Not only hermits, but other living creatures (animals especially) live in caves. Providence has provided the facing caves as a visual setting for the revelatory encounter, between hermit and founder-abbot, to take place 60 years after the caves first appeared. Monastic readers would have understood that when Brendan and Paul each stand before a cave and face each other across the fountain, they re-enact a tableau which makes it clear that the fountain symbolizes Christ crucified. The tableau provides a visual cue: it would have encouraged monastic readers to recall an ancient responsory, sung at the moment of Christ's death on Good Friday, which proclaimed that Christ 'will be known between two living creatures / animals' ('in medio duorum animalium innotesceris').[43] The rock not only produces the fountain but immediately reabsorbs any excess, so that the fountain, though not stagnant and therefore 'living water', remains round: not only like a plate, but also like a Eucharistic loaf.[44] In terms of I Corinthians 10:4 (quoted above) rock and living water together manifest Christ: the hermit has come to perceive that Christians are founded on[45] and nourished from[46] Christ, the rock, and can now share this central Christian insight both with St Brendan and with his monks. For the first 30 years an otter had brought the Spiritual

[41] Jerome, *Vita Pauli,* ch. xi: Leclerc et al., p. 168; trans. White, *Early Christian Lives,* pp. 80–1.

[42] É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting', p. 36. Séamus Heaney gave the theme classic modern expression in his poem 'In Gallarus Oratory', *Door into the Dark* (London: Faber, 1969), p. 22.

[43] The responsory 'Domine audivi', based on the Old Latin text of the Canticle of Habbakuk: see É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting', pp. 4–5, and idem, *Ritual and the Rood,* pp. 201–8. For a good recent discussion, see Richard N. Bailey, '*In Medio Duorum Animalium:* Habbakuk, the Ruthwell Cross and Bede's Life of St Cuthbert', in Elizabeth Mullins and Diarmuid Scully (eds.), *'Listen, O Isles, unto Me': Studies in Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O'Reilly* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), pp. 243–52.

[44] Every surviving sculptural representation of Saints Paul and Anthony represents the loaf as round: see É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting', pls I–XII.

[45] Cf. Eph. 2.20 and Col. 2.7.

[46] Cf. Jn 4.10; 7.38; 19.34.

Hermit a fish, with kindling to cook it, every third day, and always at the ninth hour.[47] The phrase 'on the third day' recalls the Resurrection; and, after his Resurrection, Christ had himself cooked a fish by the Sea of Galilee, so that his disciples could eat with him.[48] The ninth hour was the traditional time of Christ's death on the Cross.[49] Because of this, during seasons of fasting such as Lent, Mass was celebrated after the office of none: people did not break their fast until after the none-tide Mass.[50] During these first 30 years, the rock already provided the Spiritual Hermit with a trickle of water to drink, but that tiny stream had not yet achieved the fullness of a round pool. Water and fish: from the beginning of his stay on the island the Spiritual Hermit was already fully sustained by elements which Christ, in his death and after his Resurrection, had provided to nourish his disciples. Then, after 30 years, the otter and its fish disappear; instead, the Spiritual Hermit discerns the two caves and the round pool issuing from, and absorbed by, the rock: he will henceforth be sustained entirely from and through Christ. Paul the Egyptian hermit was clad in rough garments, but the Irish Paul is naked and covered by snow-white hair, so that only his face and eyes are visible: he has regained the naked innocence of a neophyte at baptism (his white hair gleaming like a baptismal robe), or of Adam in Paradise, before the Fall and its attendant shame.[51]

The Spiritual Hermit tells his, very Irish, life story to St Brendan and his monks. He had joined St Patrick's monastery aged 10; after 50 years as a monk, he was serving as custodian of the community cemetery. One day, when he was digging a grave in which to bury a deacon, an unknown old man appeared to him and directed: 'Don't dig the grave there, because it is someone else's grave.' Paul asks his visitant who he is. 'Don't you know me? I am your abbot' says St Patrick, who tells Paul he had died the day before ('Heri enim migraui de seculo': St Patrick presents his own death as an exodus from the world).[52] He is to be buried in the grave Paul has been digging ('Ipse est enim locus sepulture mee').[53] The Abbot shows Paul another place where the deacon is to be buried, and commands Paul, having buried the deacon, to go to the seashore next day and embark on a boat, steered by Providence, which will bring him to 'the place where you will await the day of your death' ('que te ducet ad locum ubi expectabis diem mortis tue.').[54] He is to tell no one about this ghostly visitation or these instructions. This detailed narrative is inspired by the motif, common in Irish hagiography, in which an angel reveals to an Irish abbot his 'Place of Resurrection', *locus Resurrectionis*, where he with his community around

[47] On the significance of otters, see Richard Bailey, 'In medio duorum animalium', pp. 248–50.
[48] Jn 21.9.
[49] Mt. 27.46.
[50] Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: its Origins and Development,* 2 vols (Dublin, 1951–55: reprint, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1986), vol. I, pp. 245–52. This regulation provided a practical motive for the anticipation, in various European vernaculars, of 'the ninth hour' into 'noon' or its equivalents.
[51] *Vita Sancti Pauli,* ch. xvii: Leclerc *et al.*, *Jérôme: Trois vies,* pp. 180–1; White, *Early Christian Lives,* pp. 83–4.
[52] Selmer, p. 73, line 58.
[53] Ibid., lines 58–9.
[54] Ibid., lines 61–2.

him are to await the Day of Judgement and the resurrection of the body.[55] Evidently St Patrick the Abbot has had supernatural instructions about where, precisely, he is to be buried; he now in turn directs Paul how to get to his own place of Resurrection. Jerome's Paul died and was buried by lions, but the death of the Irish hermit is not described: instead, his abbot has given him his final mission: 'as I was told in advance, here I must wait in this flesh for the Day of Judgement' ('Et hic debeo modo, sicut fuerat mihi promissum, expectare diem iudicii in ista carne.').[56] He has become an image of Christian identification with Christ: 'for that rock was Christ' on which he lives, and from the rock he drinks living water, from a pool as round as any Eucharistic loaf. When St Brendan arrives Paul is 150 years old: he has already lived a full psalter of years.

The little 'port' which appeared to Brendan and his monks seems designed to recall, not only the narrow gate ('portam') of Matthew 7.13, but also a Eucharistic rite: just before communion, a sliver of the loaf was broken off and inserted into the wine of the consecrated chalice. The Irish vernacular liturgical tract in the Stowe Missal sees the priest as re-enacting, at this moment, the role of Longinus on Calvary. The commentary envisages the Mass celebrated in an oriented church, in which the priest, standing before the altar (with his back to the congregation) to perform the rite, would have faced east:

> The particle that is cut off from the bottom of the half which is on the [priest's] left hand is the figure of the wounding with the lance in the armpit of the right side; for westward was Christ's face on the Cross, to wit, *contra civitatem,* and eastward was the face of Longinus; what to him was left to Christ was right.[57]

If the narrow port which interrupts the perfect roundness of the little island does indeed refer to this moment just before communion, then the little island should be understood to symbolize precisely that the Eucharistic breaking of bread proclaims 'Christ, and him crucified'.[58] Its shape recalls the moment when the spear opened

[55] On the motif, see Hubertus Lutterbach, 'Der *locus resurrectionis:* Ziel der irischen *peregrini:* zugleich ein Beitrag zur Eschatologie im frühen Mittelalter', *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 89 (Rom, Freiburg, Wien: Herder, 1994), pp. 26–46; on the importance of the idea for the layout of Irish monastic sites, see Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual and Memory* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 73, 80, 85, 149–50, 274–5.

[56] Selmer, p. 76, lines 87–88. The phrase 'in ista carne' is reminiscent of Job 19.26: 'in carne mea videbo Deum' ['and in my flesh I shall see God'].

[57] *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: A Collection of Old Irish glosses, Scholia, Prose and Verse,* eds. Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901–03), Vol. II, p. 254, par. 15. The rite of *Commixtio* is clearly represented in the image of the Meeting of Saints Paul and Anthony on the Nigg Stone, Easter Ross, Scotland: there a sliver is cut into the lower left quadrant of the round Eucharistic loaf: É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting', pp. 8–14; *Ritual and the Rood,* pp. 158–60; Isabel Henderson, '"This Wonderful Monument": the Cross-slab at Nigg, Easter Ross, Scotland', in *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson,* eds. Paul Binski and William Noel (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2001), pp. 115–47 (at p. 125). On the phrase 'contra civitatem', perhaps see Isa. 65.12, quoted in Rom. 10.21.

[58] 1 Cor. 2.2: 'Iesum Christum | et hunc crucifixum'.

Christ's side, so that blood and water, Baptism and the Eucharist, can flow forth to nourish all creation with Christ's life. In his hymn *Pange lingua* Venantius Fortunatus had dramatized this idea in a brilliant swerve from the microcosm of Christ's body to the macrocosm of the Universe:

> Mite corpus perforatur; sanguis, unda profluit
> *His tender body is pierced, and blood and water flow from it:*
> Terra, pontus, astra, mundus quo lauantur flumine.[59]
> *in its flood earth, sea, sky and the Universe are cleansed.*

The hermit, after he first welcomed and recognized Brendan, told him to invite his crew onto the summit of the island; and greeted each monk by his name. Like Brendan, they see the symbolic island landscape as Paul himself has come to see it.[60] Though there is no implication that they have become as heroic as Paul, they can all benefit from the insights his attentive fidelity has attained. Paul now prophesies the final stages of their seven-year adventure, and provides sustenance for St Brendan and his crew for their next voyage, which will take 40 days and end on Holy Saturday. They are to fill their vessels from the water that springs from the rock. When they have filled their vessels he blesses them, as once more they set off towards the south. During their Lenten voyage, water from the rock-island of the man of God is their only sustenance: drunk every third day, it ensures that, like Paul, they are satisfied and without hunger or thirst ['et erat illis cibus tantum aqua, quam acceperant ab insula uiri Dei, per triduum reficiendo sine ulla esurie et siti permanentes leti omnes.'][61] On Holy Saturday, as Paul had foretold, they arrive at the island where they are to celebrate Easter. We were not told how long it took them to fill their vessels with water from the rock, nor on what day precisely they left Paul's *locus resurrectionis*. But if their voyage took 40 days, it must have begun on the Monday or Tuesday after the First Sunday of Lent: certainly well within its Octave. This provides us with the final key to the witty *contrafactum* of Jerome in Chapter xxvi.[62] Any monastic reader throughout Europe would have known that the Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent was Matthew 4.1-11, the fullest account in the Gospels of Christ's 40 days' fast and his temptations in the desert: this lection had provided a rationale for the Lenten season. The first temptation is about bread (and rock):

> And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, "Not in bread

[59] Walsh et al., *One Hundred Latin Hymns,* No. 20, Stanza 7, and notes on pp. 422–4. For further references to the motif, see É. Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood,* pp. 6, 150–1.

[60] Selmer, p. 72, lines 30–34.

[61] Id., p. 76, chapter xxvii, lines 4–5.

[62] Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio* is not the earliest Irish *contrafactum* of the meeting of St Paul and St Anthony. In the early eighth century, Adomnán, in a subtle parody of Jerome's narrative, told how St Columba honoured Crónán, whom he perceived to be an (incognito) bishop, by declining (as a mere priest) to break the Eucharistic bread with the bishop, at the community Mass: *Vita Columbae,* Book I, Chapter xliv, discussed in É. Ó Carragáin, 'Ruthwell and Iona', pp. 139–40; Id., *Ritual and the Rood,* pp. 156–7.

> alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" ["Non in pane solo vivet homo sed in omni verbo quod procedit de ore Dei"].[63]

The act of reading itself was valued, in monastic culture, primarily as food for prayer. A monastic reader of the *Navigatio* would have understood Chapter xxvi in relation to the act of meditative reading (the effort to 'heare . . ., read, marke, learne and inwardly digeste')[64] on which he or she was engaged:

> The fragmentation of the concept of prayer inevitable upon its more schematic analysis has made the use of such terms as "reading", "meditation", and "prayer" misleading. For Anselm and his predecessors these were different aspects of the same thing, not separate exercises in their own right. Reading was an action of the whole person, by which the meaning of a text was absorbed, until it became prayer. It was frequently compared to eating – "Taste by reading, chew by understanding, swallow by loving and rejoicing," and the text "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is" was applied more often to the reading of the scriptures than to the Eucharist before the twelfth century.[65]

The paragraph just quoted provides an excellent modern guide to the way in which an early medieval monastic audience would have heard or read Chapter xxvi of the *Navigatio*, enjoyed its wit, and learnt from it how hermits inspire and sustain monastic communities.

[63] Mt. 4.3–4. For the uses of Mt. 4:1–11, see Theodor Klauser, *Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum: Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner ältesten Geschichte,* I: Typen (Münster: Aschendorff, 1971), p. 19, No. 56, and all later lectionaries; Ursula Lenker, *Die westsächsische Evangelienversion und die Perikopenordnungen im angelsächsischen England* (Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, Philosophische Fakultät, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie, 20) (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1997), p. 309, No. 67.

[64] First Prayer-Book of Edward VI, Collect for the second Sunday in Advent: *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI* (London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1910), p. 34.

[65] Sr Benedicta Ward (trans.) *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), Introduction, pp. 43–4. I am grateful to the late Malcolm B. Parkes who in 1973, when this book first appeared, perceived its importance, and recommended strongly that I buy a copy and, as he then put it, 'inwardly digest' its implications.

3

Theology and the Paschal Controversy: Bede's Case Against the British Church

Rowan Williams

Benedicta Ward's introductory study of Bede for the Outstanding Christian Thinkers series remains an invaluable resource – not simply because of its clarity and conciseness but because it manages to do what not all studies of Bede do, in presenting the man whole, his historical and computational scholarship, his exegetical brilliance and his profound contribution to the understanding of Christian discipleship. It is important to be reminded that Bede's writing is so deeply interconnected; and in the following pages, the aim is to show just a little of that interconnectedness as it appears in the theological motivation of some of the structures of Bede's historical narrative. Such a study will not display the full richness of Bede's thinking in the way that a magisterial overview like Sister Benedicta's book manages. But it may kindle an appetite for more such 'interleaving' of the history and the theology.

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The longest continuous text incorporated into Bede's *historia ecclesiastica* is the letter of Abbot Ceolfrith to the Pictish king Naitan (Nectan) in ch. 21 of the fifth book. The abbot had been approached by the king, probably somewhere around 710, with a request for clarification about the rationale for the Roman timing of the Easter celebration and the Roman tonsure: Nectan, according to Bede, had expressed his firm resolve to live in obedience to the Roman discipline, but wished for help in arguing the case (*potentius confutare posset eos, qui pascha non suo tempore obseruare praesumerent*). The reply – generally thought to have been drafted in whole or in part by Bede himself – offers a detailed but lucid account of the problem and a case for the Roman solution based largely on exegetical points. But at its climax we find – briefly but forcefully alluded to – an argument relating to fundamental doctrine: the British/Irish computation of Easter is linked to a refusal of grace itself – in effect to Pelagianism.

> So anyone who argues that the Paschal full moon might occur before the [spring] equinox is going to at odds with the teaching of the holy Scriptures regarding the celebration of the greatest of the mysteries – and what is more, such a person will

> be agreeing with those who are confident that they can save themselves without the prevenient grace of Christ, those who presume to lay it down that they would possess perfect righteousness even if the true light had never conquered the darkness of the world by dying and rising again. (21.10)

A theologically literate reader could not have missed the allusion to the Pelagian controversy. The reference to *perfecta iustitia* echoes the title of one of Augustine's significant early contributions to the debate (probably in 415), the *de perfectione iustitiae humanae*, in which[1] he defines the 'perfection of righteousness' in the present life as consisting in an advance towards the fullness of love, demonstrated in almsgiving, fasting and prayer, motivated by desire: we continue to 'run' towards righteousness, 'reaching forward to what lies ahead' (Phil.3.12-15). 'Running rightly' is what we must hope and pray for – that is, continuing in our steady advance, never claiming to have arrived while still on this earth.[2] And, deliberately or not, there are echoes of this in Bede's Commentary on the Song of Songs: commenting on the text, 'Draw me and we will run after you', Bede stresses that we need divine help to 'run rightly', following the Incarnate Lord in his journey back to the Father. Bede and (more obliquely) Augustine both refer to 2 Tim 4.7, Paul's reference to 'finishing the course': it is something that depends entirely on God's grace, though we rightly focus our attention on how we consistently keep ourselves open to this grace, 'so that our strength may be assisted as we run'.[3] Both use the phrase *recte currere* to describe the way in which Christian perfection is a constantly unfinished business, a movement into greater and greater fullness. Perfection for us on earth is perseverance: and, as Bede says in the Commentary,[4] now that Christ has come down to earth, we do not pray that God may draw near to us but that we may be drawn near to him: we are not struggling to make contact with a distant God, but working to allow the unique grace of God incarnate to lift us to be where he is, desiring and pursuing goal which we never simply 'have'.[5]

The 'rightness' of our present life as believers is thus always a matter of persistence in hope and desire and their expression in the disciplined life of prayer and service: it is never a possession once for all achieved. So the phrasing in Ceolfrith's letter in regard to those who presume that they can 'have' or 'possess' perfect *iustitia* (*perfectam se* habere *posse iustitiam*) is not casual. Sanctity is, for Bede and Augustine alike, a stretching forward for what is not yet realized; yet at the same time the effects of this stretching forward are the solid practices of good works.[6] How then does the British/Irish computation of Easter involve its adherents in implicit Pelagianism? Just as the Pelagian does not *wait* for grace to be fulfilled in its proper season but seeks to hold on to the merit of what is achieved prior to the incarnation, passion and resurrection of Christ, so the insular churches follow a calculation that allows them to celebrate the

1 viii/18, PL 44,300.
2 viii/19, PL 44,300.
3 *In cant*. I, 1.2-3, PL 1087 AB, CCSL 193: *post te curremus . . . nos tuo subsidio ad te currentes adjuves*; compare Augustine, op. cit. PL 44, 301, *ut currentium vires adjuventur orando*.
4 I.1.3, PL 1087 C, CCSL 193.
5 See Augustine's phrasing at PL 44,301: . . . *quamvis iam in hac vita nemo habeat*.
6 E.g. In cant. IV . . . 9, PL 91,1185, CCSL 312.

Lord's resurrection *before* the proper time. The argument unfolds first from a strict reading of the key texts in Exodus about the Passover. The celebration of Passover runs from the fifteenth day of the first lunar month to the twenty-first; and the implicit requirement of the New Testament is that the celebration of Easter should be on the Sunday falling within this period. Exodus instructs the people of Israel to kill the Passover lamb on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month – that is, after sunset, as the *fifteenth* moon rises. Leavened bread is put aside from this fifteenth day, the day in which the Israelites actually left Egypt, and the days of unleavened bread thus comprise seven days and seven nights counting from the beginning of the fifteenth day to the night of the twenty-first. It is during this week that Easter must fall: it must be on the day of the resurrection, the first day of the week, and it must not be before the first day of unleavened bread – that is, before the beginning of the fifteenth day. If it fell before then, it would anticipate the commemoration of the slaughter of the lamb at the end of the fourteenth day. If the vigil of Easter is celebrated after the sunset of the thirteenth day, on the night that begins the fourteenth, this is to ignore the specific instruction of the sacred text; likewise if that vigil is postponed until the end of the fifteenth day. It is on the fourteenth that Israel's liberation begins with the slaughter of the lamb and the killing of the Egyptian firstborn, and on the fifteenth that the people are led out. If you calculate the slaughter of the lamb as falling on the fifteenth, the first day of unleavened bread will be the *sixteenth*, and you may end up with an Easter Sunday that falls after the last day of unleavened bread (the twenty-second), which is manifestly a matter of disobedience to Scripture. What is more, there is an argument from the symbolism of the movement of the heavenly bodies: a full moon falling prior to the spring equinox would belong to the last lunar month of the old year. The full moon *after* the equinox is the fullest possible reflection of a sun that has begun to provide more hours of light than there are hours of darkness. And because we celebrate at Easter the renewal of our humanity by the Christ who came *cum gratia* to be sacrificed as our Passover Lamb, we must wait for this new disposition of the celestial bodies – a moon reflecting the fully risen and triumphant 'sun of righteousness' – before we commemorate his *transitus de hoc mundo*. This is the point at which the day begins to be longer than the night: darkness is overcome by the resurrection. Christ ascends to heaven and by the Holy Spirit casts his light and grace on the lesser body, the Church, moon to his sun. And this leads into the passage quoted earlier: any calculation which allows for a celebration of Easter to begin before the spring equinox is a celebration of salvation *prior* to the paschal outpouring of grace and thus a celebration of human achievement, not of the triumph of Christ.[7]

One or two obvious points need to be made about the historical background to all this, of which the first is simply that the question at issue was never in fact whether

[7] This is a summary of the argument in V.21. For a general discussion of Bede on the computation of Easter, see the introduction to *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* by Faith Wallis (Translated Texts for Historians; Liverpool University Press, 1999); and on the Paschal controversy in Bede, M.Ohashi, 'Theory and History: An Interpretation of the Paschal Controversy in Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica', in S. Lebecq, M. Perrin and O. Szerwiniack (eds.), *Bède le Vénérable entre tradition et postérité* (Lille: CEGES, 2005), pp. 177–85. See also Daniel McCarthy, 'The Origin of the *Latercus* Pashcal Cycle of the Insular Celtic Churches', Cambrian Mediaeval Celtic Studies 28 (1994), pp. 25–49.

or not it was permissible to begin the celebration of Easter before the equinox. The British would have agreed – and indeed so would every local church that observed the decrees of the Council of Nicaea.[8] What is debated is how to calculate the equinox, and therefore the range of dates between which Easter could properly be celebrated. But – sparing the most painfully eye-watering complexities of this subject for the moment – there are in fact several subsidiary disputable matters in the hinterland of the seventh/eighth-century controversy. There had been much earlier debate about whether if the fourteenth of the lunar month fell on a Sunday, Easter should be celebrated on that day or a week later; about whether the fourteenth was the commemoration of the passion or the resurrection; about when exactly the first night-and-day of the new moon should be identified – that is, when you should start counting the days of the lunar month (from the night of the conjunction or the night when the first sliver of the new moon appeared?). Add to this a measure of cultural diversity about when to calculate the beginning of a day (sunset or dawn?), and there is a recipe for extensive confusion of just the sort that attends this issue in the first centuries of Christianity.[9] As has often been remarked, the British Church had simply retained an older computational system; what Bede or Ceolfrith objects to is in fact a *computus* which had been accepted by other Latin churches in earlier centuries (with – presumably – some of the same potential symbolic problems as the letter to Nectan identifies). But Bede/Ceolfrith argues as if it were completely clear how the equinox should be calculated so that any difference must represent a wilful revolt against the decrees of the first ecumenical council. And in rebelling against these decrees, a local church cuts itself off from the peace and unity of the Catholic Church, setting up its own self-sufficient understanding against the universal grace of Christ. Hence the 'Pelagian' accusation.

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But what is interesting is how Bede has prepared us for this argument at several strategic points throughout the *historia*: the British Church has from its very beginnings been in regular need of support from beyond its borders, not least because of a proneness to actual and undoubted Pelagianism. Regularly and deliberately, Bede marks the progress of his narrative with illustrations of the vulnerability of the British Church to this. The mission of Germanus in Book 1 is described (xvii) as a response to teaching introduced into Britain by the son of a Pelagian bishop, against the will of the British; but – just like King Nectan – the British cannot mount the arguments they need to counter the heresy. The echo is surely deliberate: Nectan's appeal in the last book of the *historia* is meant to recall that earlier episode, when those British who now try

[8] Nicaea had determined that Easter should always fall after the vernal equinox, insisting that the Church should not follow the Jewish computation of the first lunar month since this could on occasion put the date of Easter prior to the equinox.

[9] For extensive detail about the background, and about the variety of questions that could be involved, the article on 'Easter' by Lewis Hensley in *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, eds. William Smith and Samuel Cheetham (Hartford: J. B. Burr, 1876), remains as comprehensive as anything in English.

to overwhelm the Pictish court with their rhetoric themselves failed to find the right words to confute heresy and had to call in help from outside. British self-sufficiency is thus named and shamed, and we are prepared for a narrative in which continental orthodoxy regularly has to be prayed in aid to salvage the true gospel in the islands (and when Bede relates that Pelagian dissidents were banished to the 'remote interior',[10] he is probably hinting that later problems with the British church in the west of the island began at this point). It is significant too that so many features of Germanus's mission as related by Bede are recycled in later episodes: the synodical debate with local heretics settled by a miracle-working contest or display is not only repeated in the case of Germanus himself (xvii–xviii, xxi) but reworked for Augustine (II.ii). And the miraculous deliverance of Bishop Mellitus (II.vii) from a fire closely echoes Germanus's miracle in I.xix.[11] In Book II, although Pelagianism is not mentioned as an issue between the British bishops and Augustine, Bede alludes to irregularities in the British rite of baptism and – unusually – directly calls the British 'heretics' who refuse the offer of salvation.[12] The mention of baptism is tantalizing, as we hear no more of it (and it is after all a rather serious charge); but it is possible that Bede or his source suspected that the British rite (whatever it was) was insufficiently clear about deliverance from original sin, and that the reference to British 'heresy' here is a tacit glance in the direction of Pelagianism.

Book III takes us into slightly different territory, and there is less obvious allusion to the theological sins of the British (as opposed to their other sins, exemplified in the ravaging of Northumbria by Cadwallon of Gwynedd). But there is a careful and defensive account of the *Irish* computation of Easter in III.iii: Aidan, 'following the custom of his people',[13] celebrates Easter between the fourteenth and the twentieth day of the lunar month (beginning too early by Roman practice), but does so in the mistaken belief that he and the Irish are being loyal to the calculations of Anatolius. Although they are wrong about this, their intention is good. And, just to reinforce the positive picture of the Irish, Bede adds that the southern Irish follow 'the counsel of the Apostolic See' in their celebration[14]; it is not clear whether he means us to understand

[10] *expulsi insula, sacerdotibus adducuntur ad mediterranea deferendi*. The phrasing has caused some puzzlement (see E. A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre and the End of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984), p. 30); but perhaps the most intelligible reading is that those teachers who had been earlier expelled from Britain (after Germanus's first visit) had returned, but were now banished to the 'Highland Zone'. *Mediterranea* normally means the hinterland: there is no obvious way in which *expulsi insula* can refer to a punishment inflicted at the same time as a banishment to the *mediterranea*, unless the *insula* is an offshore island like Thanet or Wight. Thompson rightly thinks this improbable. Not much more probable is that the visiting bishops escort the heretics to an 'inland' area of Europe.

[11] It is worth noting that, in III.xv, Aidan is credited with stilling a storm at sea as Germanus does in I.xvii.

[12] This is the phrasing of the end of II.ii. If, as I have suggested elsewhere, this rather odd chapter embodies two sources, one British in origin, the conclusion clearly comes from a pro-Augustine narrative, presumably from Canterbury (see Rowan Williams, introduction to *Bede's Ecclesiastical History. An Introduction and Selection*, Rowan Williams and Benedicta Ward, SLG, (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 11–12.)

[13] *more suae gentis*: a tactful reminder that the Irish and the English are different *gentes*.

[14] *ad ammonitionem apostolicae sedis*; Bede anticipates Wilfrid's explicit appeal at Whitby (III.25) to the authority of the Petrine office in settling the debate.

that they owe their practice to direct papal intervention, but it is likely that he does, having given us in I.xiii a brief account of Palladius's papally inspired mission to Ireland. In III.v, we have another encomium of the Irish in connection with Iona: the Irish are not Quartodecimans, celebrating Easter 'with the Jews' on the fourteenth day; they celebrate on a Sunday but, being 'barbarians', have not learnt how to calculate which Sunday. Their 'grace and ardent love' however allow them to receive the truth with humble submission. More significantly for our purpose, Bede says of Aidan later on (III.xvii) that, although he held to a mistaken calculation of Easter, he was one with the Roman party in doctrine. He held and taught 'the redemption of the human race through the passion and resurrection and ascension into heaven of "the man Jesus Christ, mediator between God and humanity"'(I Tim. 2.5).[15] Aidan, in other words, is entirely orthodox about our dependence on the grace of the paschal mystery: he affirms what other adherents of the non-Roman *computus* implicitly do not, according to the letter to Nectan.

Book IV repeats the theme of a triumphant intervention from Rome and the wider Church in introducing Archbishop Theodore – an Asian, not a Roman, but one who shows his exemplary obedience to Roman usage by adopting the proper Roman tonsure (IV.i) and who establishes the canonical Easter at a solemn synodical gathering early in his primacy at Canterbury (IV.v). Later on (IV.xvii/xv) he presides at another synod at Hatfield which affirms the entire current set of Roman doctrinal definitions and anathemas. In the chapter following this account, we read of another Roman ambassador, the precentor and *ceremoniarius* of St Peter's, no less, who both trains the new English monasteries in the approved style of chant and brings them up to date on the latest heresies to be condemned (monotheletism in this instance; probably not a major issue in Britain at the time . . .). Thus the new English churches follow the pattern of earlier times in Britain, in receiving help, correction and guidance from Rome and even further afield; the difference is that this guidance and help is welcome and effective, in contrast to the response of so many British Christians of earlier generations. Theodore's concern for 'the things that pertain to love and to the preservation of the Church's unity' (IV.v) is at the heart of Bede's vision of the English Church, a local Christian fellowship constantly renewed in its *caritas* and *unitas* through the intervention of a loving papal oversight. Its liturgy as well as its doctrine needs to be refreshed by and checked against the practice of Rome, and anything resembling self-sufficiency on the part of the local must be eradicated.

So by the time we reach the letter to King Nectan, we have encountered in every book of the *historia* a pattern in which sound and unsound teaching and practice are contrasted. Sound practice involves obedience to Catholic order as a condition of true love within the Church; it is grounded in the repudiation of spiritual self-sufficiency or isolation – the repudiation of all that 'Pelagianism' was thought to mean. At point

[15] *non aliud corde tenebat, uenerabatur et praedicabat quam quid nos, id est, redemtionem generis humani per passionem resurrectionem ascensionem in caelos mediatoris Dei et hominum hominis Iesu Christi*. The implication is that others who followed the insular practice did not so share the same doctrine as their opponents. Bede has already told us in this chapter that Aidan was reburied on Lindisfarne when a new church dedicated to St Peter had been built – a posthumous recognition of him as an honorary pro-'Roman'.

after point, the British are shown to be at best implicit Pelagians, in contrast to both Irish and English – the English (and southern Irish, presumably the descendants of Palladius's converts) welcoming the continental interventions that the British hate and despise. The argument in the letter to Nectan about the Pelagian implication of refusing the correct computation of Easter becomes an entirely fitting and intelligible climax to a story which has been gradually and almost imperceptibly built up, a story about the repeated British refusal of Catholic fellowship and so of the free grace available in that fellowship. And if we turn again to Bede on the Song of Songs, we find some thinly-veiled allusion to British non-cooperation in the passage in Book II[16] where Bede underlines the need for the Church to be at peace: the Jewish Church once believed that they alone had received the gospel and the 'word of salvation'; but they have to learn not to undermine or ignore the work of God among the Gentiles. Later, in Book V,[17] a related passage imagines the first Jewish 'church' – that is, the synagogue – expressing its hope for salvation through grace alone: the righteous of the old dispensation await the coming of Christ so as to be brought to the perfection of blessedness.[18] If the synagogue shows envy towards the newer Church, she is in danger of losing the good things she might gain: the greatness of the love shown uniquely on the cross is what brings Jews and gentiles alike to eternal life, and there must be no attempt to restrict that love in its workings.[19] As readers of the Commentary have noted, it is fairly clear that Bede is addressing those in his own context who have refused to share in the work of evangelizing the *gentes* on their own doorstep and look down on the newer converts of the English Church, thus offending against the unity and charity of the whole Body of Christ.

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The question of how far 'Pelagianism' was in fact an issue for the British Church of the fifth – let alone the sixth or seventh – century has been much discussed, though inconclusively so. Leaving aside the fanciful and anachronistic association of Pelagius with some kind of 'Celtic' theology supposedly more in tune with the goodness of the natural order,[20] we are left very much in the dark about whether Pelagius's specific teaching had any noticeable impact in the land of his origin. It is certainly significant that Gildas does not mention him – or any doctrinal crisis associated with his name; the only heresy he has anything to say about is Arianism.[21] The celebrated phrase in

[16] *In cant.*V.iii.5, PL 1121, CCSL 234.
[17] V.vii.13, PL 1205, CCSL 337.
[18] *perfecte iam beatus fieri.*
[19] V.viii.6, PL 1212-13, CCSL, 346-7.
[20] John Cowper Powys's 1951 novel *Porius* bears some responsibility here. For a fairly typical use of Pelagius to illustrate the themes of supposedly 'Celtic' spirituality, see Robert van der Weyer, *The Letters of Pelagius*: *Celtic Soul Friend*, Evesham, Arthur James, 1995. See also Chapter 3 in Ian Bradley, *The Celtic Way* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1993).
[21] Gilda, *de excidio Britonum*, 12; the style and context suggests that this is an entirely conventional allusion to heresy, not necessarily a reflection of any specific historical doctrinal controversy in Britain.

de excidio 45 which is paralleled in a text possibly from Pelagius's hand is not quite conclusive: the authorship of the text in question is not certain, nor is it certain that Gildas's reference to the author as 'one of our own' must mean that he is British (it could simply be identifying the writer as a Christian). If it does come from Pelagius, does Gildas know this? If he does, is he silent about the author because he knows of Pelagius's condemnation, and is that silence an act of tacit support for Pelagius's teaching? Or is he simply being as evasive as usual about details we want to know?[22] A recent attempt to track his use of the word *gratia* has not produced any very clear evidence that he is conscious of a debate around the concept.[23] The substance of Gildas's work is a passionate call to repentance, equally confident of God's mercy for those who turn from their evil ways and of God's judgement on sinners; it would be hard to extract from this anything beyond the normal range of such appeals. But, given that Gildas is eager to provide as full an indictment of the sins of the British as possible, why should he ignore what is clearly for Bede's immediate sources (in Gallic chronicle and hagiography) a massive theological question? The most obvious explanation is that – whatever his own theological views – he simply does not identify any feature of the landscape of the fifth century British Church as a conflict over 'Pelagianism'. He is silent about Germanus's mission, despite sharing Germanus's interest in St Alban and his shrine, and we have to assume that he either knew nothing of the visit or strongly disapproved of it.[24]

This does not mean that he or the British Church were in fact Pelagian. By the mid-fifth century, the church in Gaul had been scarred by fierce controversy over Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings; the most rigorous possible interpretation of these had become well-nigh canonical in some circles, and 'Pelagianism' was the favoured word for any who demurred. Although the high watermark of rigorist predestinarian Augustinianism, as preached by Prosper of Aquitaine, had passed by the 440s,[25] the prevailing rhetoric required a clear polarization between Pelagian and orthodox views. The formidable British-born theologian, Faustus of Riez, was judiciously critical of both Augustine and Pelagius, but was certainly tainted with the accusation from colleagues in Gaul of sharing his fellow-countryman's errors.[26] Most of the Gallic episcopal establishment,

[22] E. A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre*, p. 23, believes that Gildas quotes the text in ignorance of its Pelagian connotations; Karen George, *Gildas's De Excidio Britonum and the Early British Church* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), is more sympathetic to the idea that Gildas is deliberately alluding to Pelagius, but implicitly accepts the terms in which the Pelagian controversy is famed in fifth-century Gallic sources, which, as we shall see later on, is highly questionable.

[23] Karen George, op. cit., pp. 103–6.

[24] Ibid., p. 120: to Gildas, 'Germanus is one of the perpetrators of the heresy rather than a cure for it'. Chapter 7 of this monograph looks in detail at the *vita Germani* and its relation to Gildas's work. The question of whether Gildas's description in ch. 11 of the martyrdom of Alban is dependent on any version of the texts used by or edited by Germanus is a complex one, but I am not convinced that Gildas need have had any direct knowledge of any texts associated with Germanus.

[25] See the judicious comments of Robert Markus in, 'The legacy of Pelagius: orthodoxy, heresy and conciliation', in Rowan Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy. Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 214–34, especially p. 218 (in Gaul, 'the temperature of the conflict was falling rapidly in the 430s).

[26] The beginning of Faustus's *de gratia* (I.1) administers a sharp slap on the wrist to both Pelagius and Augustine. The work is studied fully by T. A. Smith, De Gratia: *Faustus of Riez's Treatise on Grace and its Place in the History of Theology* (Notre Dame Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990). For the general Gallic background, Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), is indispensable.

if they did not exactly back the Augustinian rigorists, found it expedient to define themselves as unequivocally against 'Pelagianism', and pressure was being applied to dissenters along the lines of the imperial edict condemning Pelagianism in 418.[27] The story which Bede derives from Prosper's chronicle and Constantius's *vita S. Germani* that Pelagian teaching was introduced into Britain by Agricola, described as the son of a heretical bishop, may thus point to an émigré Gallic dissident looking for new audiences rather than an indigenous British context.[28] In other words, 'Pelagianism' in Britain is at least as likely to be an importation of the internecine troubles of the Gallic churches as an outbreak of British solidarity with Pelagius himself or his followers. Germanus's mission would then be in part a pursuit of Gallic troublemakers, not a simple act of intervention at the behest of the Pope, as Prosper has it, or of a Gallic synod, as in Germanus's *Vita* and in Bede, or indeed of elements in the British church.[29] But, that said, it would equally make sense for some in Britain to use the local – perhaps very local – bother around the teaching of Agricola as a peg on which to hang an invitation (mediated politely through a synodical process?) to one of the best known Gallic bishops, a model of the developing post-imperial 'proconsular' style of episcopacy in Gaul, to come and address a variety of other local problems – notably to galvanize a complacent or ineffectual local elite into better-organized resistance to the barbarians. Germanus, we are told, confronts 'lavishly dressed' supporters of the heresy when he arrives in Britain,[30] suggesting precisely a wealthy local leadership; it is not too bold an idea to think that some in the Church's hierarchy in Britain were eager to prod such figures into more militant resistance. A former Roman commander like Germanus would be an obvious person to consult. Whatever the historical foundation for the 'Alleluia' victory,[31] the story reflects a memory that Germanus's visit had a strong and deliberate political content. And Gildas's silence in turn suggests that the visit was confined to precisely those areas from which Gildas claims to be cut off[32] and that little or nothing of it trickled through – or just possibly that Gildas did not identify with the strategy associated with Germanus and backed the heirs and successors of some other party in the Romano-British elite (though this seems unlikely, given Gildas's own

[27] Mathisen, op. cit., pp. 40–6, is illuminating on the way in which anti-Pelagian accusations became 'rhetorical devices' in this period for settling other kinds of score.

[28] Thompson, *Saint Germanus*, pp. 21–2, had already raised the question of Agricola's origins. Nothing in the text makes a British origin obvious.

[29] Mathisen, op. cit., pp. 101–2, notes that Prosper's reference to the Pope in this connection should be taken with a pinch of salt; Prosper has an axe to grind about the Pope's importance in the affairs of the Gallic Church.

[30] Bede, *historia* I.xvii.

[31] See Chapter 5 of Thompson, *Saint Germanus*, on the historical questions around this event.

[32] *de excidio* 10. This text poses something of a problem in that it seems to suggest that both Verulamium, site of Alban's martyrdom, and Caerleon, where Julius and Aaron suffered, were equally inaccessible (to Gildas and/or to the majority of the Christian population of Britain) because of the activities of the Germanic settlers – which makes it difficult to imagine where Gildas is writing or what pattern of hostile settlement he is presupposing (see Richard Sharpe's immensely useful essay on 'Martyrs and Local Saints in Late Antique Britain', in Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Mediaeval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 75–154; on this subject, pp. 107–8). But he need not be making the same claim of inaccessibility for both the shrines in question; what he says is that shrines were both cut off and destroyed, so that he may mean simply that a martyrium in Caerleon had suffered in some sort of assault.

castigation of the British leadership for not being robust enough in the face of the Germanic settlements).

What disappears from view in this reconstruction is anything like a widespread or intellectually focused doctrinal dispute. Agricola's activities may or may not have had much to do with actively promoting distinctively Pelagian doctrine, but they provided a helpful peg on which to hang an invitation to a distinguished representative of *Romanitas* and orthodoxy to come and put some steel into a flagging administration. Appeals to Gaul were not, of course, unprecedented: Victricius of Rouen had been invited in 396 to help with some unspecified problem,[33] and the tantalizing evidence from St Patrick's writings suggests that Gallo-British contacts were both common and sometimes rather fraught.[34] But what the approach to Germanus guaranteed was that any troubles interior to the British church would be absorbed into a particular narrative of heresy and orthodoxy whose terms were fixed by what was happening in Gaul – the struggle to establish a clear official orthodoxy characterized by unambiguous condemnations of Pelagian teaching. It was an orthodoxy initially somewhat in tension with elements of the monastic world in Gaul, for whom the imperatives of the ascetical life implied some caution about too much uncritical eloquence on the subject of our absolute dependence on grace or on the inevitability of failure and repentance. The theology of John Cassian, the most important figure in the background of resistance to rigorist Augustinianism, saw the temptation of Christ as a focal image and model in the monastic life, and the painstaking analysis of different levels of temptation which accompanied this might well seem to have more in common with Pelagius's universe than Augustine's, at first sight. In Gaul, monasteries influenced by Cassian, especially the great community at Lerins where Faustus of Riez was abbot, were among the focal points of unease about the ultra-Augustinian consensus developing elsewhere – although they also provided bishops who defended that consensus. Although it is possible to overstate the extent of the relationship,[35] some of these communities undoubtedly influenced British monasticism. To find Gildas identifying with this world of discourse would not be at all surprising; and it is a corrective to the still quite common idea that there might have been something that

[33] Victricius, *de laude sanctorum*; see Sharpe, art.cit., p. 79.

[34] See Chapter 43 of the Confession, which implies an existing bond with Gallic Christians and a degree of veneration for them.

[35] Mathisen, op. cit. on the influence and 'mythos' of Lerins; see also the important study by Conrad Leyser, '"This Sainted Isle": Panegyric, Nostalgia, and the Invention of Lerinian Monasticism', in Will E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (eds.), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity. Essays in Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honour of R.A. Markus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), pp. 188–206. Leyser argues that the monastic elite of Lerins were confused by their own success in taking over a Gallic episcopate previously dominated by dynastic relations and landowner-based patronage, and identifies a growing wariness among more 'Augustinian' bishops (even those with impeccable monastic pedigrees) of ascetics bidding for ecclesiastical power (see esp. pp. 191–4). But see also pp. 203 ff. on the importance of Cassian's influence in shaping an interiorized spirituality that could be transferred from cloister to episcopal throne – an influence manifest in Faustus. This discussion is of great help in understanding the inadequacy of taking at face value the standard Gallic narrative of Augustinian versus Pelagian theologies as being at the core of church disputes in the province. Cf. the discussion in Sharpe, art.cit., pp. 98–102, on the exaggerations in some of the scholarly literature of British dependence on a 'Lerins'-style tradition supposed to be radically at odds with mainstream episcopal life in Gaul.

could be called 'Pelagianism' in Britain which was associated with worldly and wealthy groups in the old Roman-British areas. This is certainly the impression that the *Vita* of Germanus means to give, but it begs any number of questions; it is more helpful to see the wariness towards what I have called rigorist Augustinianism as typical of certain strands in monastic spirituality. Gallic anti-Pelagianism built on the experience of those who, although formed in the same monastic environment, became increasingly concerned (like Augustine himself) with administering large and diverse communities of the faithful in a culturally fragile environment.[36] But on any showing, what was described and excoriated as Pelagianism, whether in Gaul or in Britain, cannot be identified with some sort of complacent worldliness: the typology behind this belongs to a heresiology that works with almost mythic polarities.

However, the combination of Gildas's silence and the highly developed narrative of Gallic church politics provided Bede with a ready-made framework for characterizing the weaknesses of the British church. The fact of the need for an anti-Pelagian mission (as the Gallic sources unsurprisingly present what was certainly a less straightforward set of events) early in the record of British church history allows Bede to offer in the first book of the *historia* a 'key signature' for his own chronicle. This is a church that needs external help – as all local churches do; its vulnerability to heresy makes it more needy than some; but from welcoming assistance in the early fifth century it degenerates into arrogant self-sufficiency by the end of the sixth and receives the appropriate judgement. Bede is not in a position to see just how far this involves a projection onto British circumstances of a specifically Gallic problem. Germanus is, for him, the archetype of the Catholic holy man who can represent the wholeness of Christian truth to the remote isles. It is possible that he is also being prayed in aid to remind the Anglian leaders of Bede's own day that they should not cease to be vigilant about the threat from the British (V.xxiii): those who have refused the *catholica pax ac veritas* are now implicitly in the same relation to the *gens Anglorum* as the barbarians of Germanus's day were to the hopelessly unmilitary Christian citizens of post-Roman Britain (I.xii on the Romano-British ignorance of the arts of war). And the decline in martial skill and enterprise, manifest in the expanding number of rather doubtful monastic vocations,[37] obviously leaves the new Christian population vulnerable to their unreconciled neighbours. It may be that the role of Germanus in the first book is meant to underline this potential problem as much as the strictly theological one.

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Bede's case against the British church is a somewhat more coherent and theologically complex matter than has sometimes been supposed. His overall reading of the history of the British church, incomprehensibly resistant to the supposedly universal discipline of the Easter *computus*, allows him to see the Paschal controversy as symptomatic of

[36] The classic account of this is still ch. 31 of Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber, 1967), to be read in tandem with Leyser's article.

[37] Cf. Bede's polemic against pseudo-vocations in the *Letter to Egbert*.

a deep-seated refusal of *pax* in the name of self-sufficiency; such a refusal belongs to the very heart of the Pelagian heresy, and it is thus, for Bede, no accident that the first serious engagement between British Christians and their brothers and sisters in continental Europe after their first (papally initiated) conversion should be connected with their inability to fight off this heresy – an inability of which their military weakness is a kind of symbolic correlate. Germanus becomes the archetype for all those who seek to offer the resources of *catholica pax ac veritas* to the struggling islanders. And their increasingly stubborn and unreasonable resistance to this testifies to the persistence of the root heresy, so that it is completely intelligible that their Paschal practice speaks symbolically of an impatient anticipation of the work of grace in the cross and resurrection. The Bedan and Augustinian picture of perfection – *recte currere*, the pressure forwards of unassuaged desire and repentant self-awareness – stands over against a spirituality and a liturgical practice for which the possession of perfect righteousness is possible before the Lent of repentant self-awareness is over and the new light of Christ has given us the ultimate definitive vision of who we are and who and what we may become.[38]

Constantius's life of Germanus was one of the most substantial written sources available to Bede and it is not surprising that it has the importance it has in the construction of this picture. The modern reader is bound to ask about the effect on Bede's narrative of a text driven by the theological and political agendas of another province: Constantius, like most of his Gallic contemporaries, has a clear picture of where the fundamental battle lines are drawn for the Church in Gaul, and Bede accepts the framework they provide. He is not interested – nearly three centuries later – in the various ways in which the simple black-and-white map of Gallic anti-Pelagianism fails to represent adequately the range of theological opinion in the province. It is piquant to reflect that Bede would undoubtedly have supported much of the ascetical tradition which resisted rigorist Augustinian doctrine in Gaul; he might have found it as difficult as many Gallic bishops and teachers did to disentangle supposed disputes over the doctrine of grace from the various battles about precedence and patronage which were dressed up in theological finery in fifth-century Gaul. Bede's own heroes breathe a spirit recognizable in a monastery like Lerins and the spiritual strenuousness of his teaching echoes the commonplaces of a Cassian or a Faustus. There is no resting place for the one seeking a holy life: even when external good works have become a settled pattern, we still have to communicate this in preaching. And the peace that comes with good works is only a foretaste of what lies ahead, and we can never stop and decide we have grown enough in faith and labours.[39]

So in recognizing the importance for Bede of a scheme that portrayed the British as consistently Pelagian, we must recognize also the artificiality of the way in which the Pelagianism/orthodoxy conflict is set out in especially the Gallo-Roman sources as they touch on both Gaul and Britain. We cannot conclude that there was a clear-cut division about the doctrine of grace in which every position short of the extreme predestinarian

[38] On the significance of coming to the light of Christ to have our weaknesses fully exposed, see, e.g., Bede's introduction to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, in which he spells out his anti-Pelagian agenda, PL91, 1070D.

[39] See, e.g., *in cant*. III. V.2, PL91, 1153-5, CCSL 274-6, and IV.vii.2, PL 91 1189-90, CCSL 317-8.

theology of Prosper of Aquitaine could be seen as some sort of conscious variant of 'Pelagianism' (which is why the wholly unhelpful term 'Semi-Pelagianism' ought to be relegated to the same lumber room as 'Semi-Arian').[40] Once again, we have only to look to Faustus of Riez to see that Pelagius's distinctive views could be vigorously disowned by a writer equally prepared to say flatly that Augustine was just wrong in his later treatises.

The Gallo-Roman debates, though, like Bede's own configuration of the Paschal controversy, exemplify a feature of early Christian heresiology that is not entirely unfamiliar in more recent times. Theological debate over limited issues regularly – we might say compulsively – defines itself as being about fundamentals: if another Christian group beginning from the same theological data as ourselves comes to different conclusions, then surely their grasp of those basic data must be faulty – or, more seriously, they must be approaching these data in a spirit of wilful blindness. The history of the trinitarian controversies in the fourth century illustrates the point: if Arius denies that the divine Logos shares directly in the unchangeable nature of God, he *must* believe that Christ is capable of change and thus of sin.[41] Or, in the case of the controversies over the *filioque* in later centuries, the Latin formula that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son must entail an assimilation of Father to Son and a subordination of the Spirit to both.[42] More contemporary examples are not far to seek. For Bede to interpret the British Paschal *computus* as a sign of latent Pelagianism is a way of claiming that dissent from the mainstream view is not only unreasonable or obscurantist, but a more or less deliberate contradiction of the received theology of grace and so, by a natural extension, of the very activity of grace: how can we be properly open to a grace we systematically misconceive? And if Easter is celebrated wrongly, are we not at the very least in danger of misconceiving the nature of the Paschal mystery itself and so, once again, refusing its fruits? Earlier in Book V of the *historia* (15–16), Bede has described the role of Adamnan of Iona in persuading his community of the need to adopt the Roman computation. *Unitatis et pacis studiosissimus*, Adamnan is a model of cooperation; but he is also celebrated as someone who wrote a significant book on the Holy Land, and Bede makes a point of providing what he describes as an abbreviated version of Adamnan's account of the Holy Land, especially the holy sites of Jerusalem. It is as if Adamnan's conformity to the Catholic discipline about Easter is almost subliminally connected to his awareness of the concrete historical grounding of the Easter narrative: Adamnan writes about the actuality of the Paschal memory in the Holy City itself; no wonder he is obedient to the only ecclesial discipline that fully reflects the gratuitous saving power of the events which the Holy Sepulchre commemorates.

[40] Leyser, art. cit, p. 192, calls the term 'unhelpfully anachronistic'.

[41] See, e.g., R. Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition,* second edition (London: SCM Press, 2001), pp. 113–15 on this.

[42] A classic statement in Vladimir Lossky, 'The Procession of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Trinitarian Doctrine', *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), pp. 71–96; cf. Lev Karsavin, 'Der Geist des Ruessischen Christentums', in N. Von Bubnoff and H. Ehrenburg (eds.), *Oestliches Christentums Dokumente*, vol. II *Philosophie* (Munich: Beck, 1925), pp. 355–63.

Bede's method of argument is not likely to commend itself to the contemporary reader, aware of the ways in which theological debate can be distorted and intensified by the perennial temptation to present every potentially serious disagreement as one that touches the fundamentals of faith; and the historian will be bound to point out the ways in which Bede's narrative begs questions and reads events through a particular and partisan lens. But to see how significant the anti-Pelagian theme is for the *historia* as an element that quietly but firmly shapes the structure of the narrative is to see some of the skill with which Bede moulds his story as a tale of two churches, one receptive to grace and one rebelling against it. The British churches will have had their own version of events, one in which anxiety over Pelagianism was almost certainly not a governing factor; but we do not have to endorse Bede's monumentally questionable historical reconstruction to be struck also by the eloquence and depth of his own appropriation of an Augustinian theology of grace and sanctity, his celebration of the energy of desire for God, by which we run towards a goal never attained on earth.

4

Bede's View of the Place of the Eucharist in Anglo-Saxon Life: The Evidence of the *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*

Thomas O'Loughlin

A historiographical gap

The history of the Eucharist – either as an element of liturgy or as theological topic – is usually pursued using, principally, two kinds of sources. The most common is the examination of liturgical materials such as service books, liturgical artefacts and descriptions of the liturgy like that found in Justin Martyr.[1] The other source, often more favoured by those interested in eucharistic theology, is formal presentations of belief regarding the Eucharist whether in the form of sermons, theological treatises or the products of controversy. Of this second category, the most eminent patristic example is probably Gregory of Nyssa's *Catechetical Oration*, 37.[2] However, even when these approaches are combined, there is still a yawning gap in our historical appreciation and understanding. This arises because the primary engagement with the Eucharist for all concerned was located in the experience of regular ritual practice.[3] Such engagement is better imagined as that culture's eucharistic *mentalité*: a common set of assumptions and attitudes embedded in actual liturgical practice, reinforced day by day in their communities' actual manner of worship (with its positive points, limitations and its distortions), in which the actions and texts of the liturgy, along with the tradition of theology, were received and understood.[4] The Eucharist was familiar, both as a practice and as something valued in faith, to all; and that experience shaped their perception of the tradition, the questions they posed to the tradition, and their

[1] See P. F. Bradshaw and M. E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (London: SPCK Publishing, 2012).

[2] J. H. Strawley (ed.), *The Catechetical Oration of Gregory of Nyssa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), pp. 141–52.

[3] See J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Towards Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) on the significance of repetition in ritual; and E. W. Rothenbuhler, *Ritual Communication: From Everyday Conversation to Mediated Ceremony* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications 1998) for the theoretical underpinning of the approach taken in this paper.

[4] It is taken for granted in this paper that how any text/practice is received in the tradition can be radically at variance with any analysis of what those texts meant at some pristine original moment.

silences: the questions that never crossed their minds. Yet this understanding could be both more fundamental than what they declared in the classroom or in preaching, while its implicit beliefs could also be inconsistent with, and contradictory of, that formal theology. Similarly, that day-to-day experiential understanding was often very different from the understanding embedded in liturgical texts they used. While the liturgical texts expressed one understanding and perhaps a set of practical demands, actual practice and commitment might go in the very opposite direction. Consequently, this *mentalité* is very often invisible within the documentary record as studied by liturgists and theologians.

When we do glimpse this *mentalité* it is often in marginal groups where there was a definite interest in knowing how *they* – people other than the recorders – were different from 'orthodoxy'; and so it is difficult to know how representative are the materials that have come down to us. Moreover, that said, there is an inherent problem with our sources in that most surviving texts are the work of clerics and monks where the Eucharist played a special part in their daily lives, their corporate identity, and, given their distinct liturgical roles, one which was necessarily different from that of lay Christians. Yet their eucharistic *mentalité* was probably well formed before they entered the ranks of the tonsured. One might argue that surviving artefacts – vessels or sculpture – avoid such specialist prisms, but these too were made to fill the needs of monks and clergy;[5] and in any case often continued to repeat traditional forms long after the rationale for those forms had ceased to be part of their lived experience or understanding.[6] In effect, the evolution of formal liturgical practice, explicit theological reflection, and common understanding takes place at different speeds, with, frequently, time lags between them. Hence, what is found within a ritual implies one understanding of the Eucharist – fixed at a particular time, what is found in preaching another, while what was received, valued, embedded and transmitted in a community's culture presents yet a third view.

This third view, which can easily be ignored by liturgists and theologians in their investigation, was, paradoxically, the growing edge of the actual tradition within the churches. In its wake came formal theology acting as its follower seeking to explain and justify what was already taken for granted as 'the church's faith'. While the liturgy, which tends to preserve verbal formulae, evolved its actual forms to the new interests: actions no longer relevant became atrophied formalities, while new rituals and practices grew to serve the new interests. On Iona, for example, in the time when Bede was a youth, they still used fourth- and fifth-century texts designed for urban basilicas with large gatherings, still read Cassian's references to the Eucharist and monk-priests, but their actual theology was elsewhere and manifested itself in many monk-priests being busily engaged each morning in private Masses, on many 'side altars' simultaneously, in virtual silence except for whispers between celebrants and servers.[7]

[5] See T. O'Loughlin, 'The liturgical vessels of the Latin eucharistic liturgy: a case of an embedded theology', *Worship* 82 (2008), pp. 482–504.

[6] See T. O'Loughlin, 'Liturgical Evolution and the Fallacy of the Continuing Consequence', *Worship* 83 (2009), pp. 312–23.

[7] See T. O'Loughlin, 'Treating the "Private Mass" as Normal: Some Unnoticed Evidence from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 51 (2009), pp. 334–44.

Faced with this situation historians are tempted to assemble materials from a variety of sources to build a composite picture. But such undertakings, necessary as they are, run the risk of assuming a common experience underlying a wide variety of items of evidence that have been taken, of necessity, from sources with a wide geographical and temporal range. However, to assume that these bits are *tesserae* of a mosaic is to argue in a circle; that said, this is often all we can do. The fact remains that we have very few sources, apart from formal treatises or liturgical books, which display sufficient evidence to show us how that person, in that community, saw the Eucharist. One might think that the obvious place to look is in hagiography – and it has been exploited – but this too is limited in that *uitae* were written within well-known traditions and the stories can be seen as forms that may or may not reflect the actual experience of the times of their authors. But a text or texts that is/are *not* focused on the Eucharist within the planning of its author, yet which contain many references to it and its practice, is to the historian 'a pearl of great price': in such a text one could study the references to the Eucharist without seeing them as either part of some controversy or part of a tradition of edification – though it is doubtful if any writer on the Eucharist has ever been wholly free of some legacy of controversy or some hortatory element. One such text is Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* in that there are sufficient references to the Eucharist, and to its practice, for us to build up a picture that is tied to a specific time and place.[8] Equally, it is clear that these references are incidental to Bede's primary concerns in writing (whatever purposes we surmise for the *Historia*) in that promoting a particular approach to the Eucharist was not one of them. Therefore, we can assume that these references expressed Bede's, and his audience's, *mentalité* regarding the Eucharist. One final introductory point: because it is those informal references to practice that are my concern, there will be no attempt to cross-reference what Bede writes in the *Historia* with snippets of his exegesis of biblical texts taken as relating to the Eucharist. This might seem strange but such combinations assume that there is a consistency between formal theological study and actual ritual perception, and it is the dissonance between such classroom opinions and actual engagement that is the starting point of this essay.

Praying for Bede

Few scenes relating to Bede are more memorable than that of his death – to the very end he is active as a scholar: on Isidore's *De natura rerum*; as a translator: of John's gospel; and as a monk: ruminating on the songs of the Scriptures.[9] Dying with an invocation of the trinity on the lips, the *Gloria Patri*, Cuthbert the deacon remarks that they had never seen such a death full of devotion and tranquillity – and we, the readers, can only agree that here the hagiographical *topos* of the 'good death' is portrayed to perfection.

[8] I am using the edition of B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1969).

[9] Cuthbert's *Epistola de obitu Bedae*; I am using the edition printed in Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 580–7.

What is less remembered is Bede's final request of his brothers that they should diligently say 'Masses (*missas*) and prayers for him.' Moreover, the reason we have Cuthbert's letter is his desire to thank Cuthwin for a gift – the *Epistola de obitu Bedae* is an acknowledgement letter – which has been received with much gratitude. That gift is not to Jarrow but to Bede himself: Cuthwin has diligently celebrated Masses and prayed for the repose of Bede's soul – and so has taken part in carrying out Bede's last wish. In this small detail of wish and its fulfilment we get a glimpse of what is one of the underlying assumptions of Bede and his confreres regarding the Eucharist. Despite having died a most tranquil death, and 'his soul having been carried to the joy of heaven by angels', there is also a belief among all concerned that Bede must undergo some sort of penal purification after death; and this process is aided by having 'Masses' (note the plural) devoted to this purpose.[10] The two notions – angels receiving Bede into paradise and the need for Masses to aid his deliverance from suffering – sit side by side in Cuthbert's letter without any sense of theological inconsistency. For Cuthbert, one suspects, both these statements are responses to the empirical situation in which he, Cuthwin and Bede lived: on the one hand, Bede had a holy death and was undoubtedly at one with the saints; on the other, no one is without sin, save the Christ, and this was linked to mortality[11] and the need for repentance.[12] So accepting both, he could announce that Bede was a saint while still thanking Cuthwin for his gift of Masses. And presumably, Cuthbert's own brethren were also celebrating Masses for Bede's repose. Put bluntly, this practice amounted to the belief that in a priest celebrating Mass there was a 'good action' – for it was such an awesome sacrifice that to occasion it by the priest's work was itself awesome – that the good effect of this action could be disposed by that agent not just to his own sanctity but to the sanctification of others, or as a prayer of petition, or as a remedy for the effects of sin in this life and *post mortem*. Each of these good acts were, obviously, distinct, and so they could be collected and so their effect seen in terms of amounts – a notion that was, in its basic logic, little different to the repetition of prayers, fasts or the working of penitentials.[13] Viewed in this way, while the effect of one Mass was good, that of many Masses was better! Cuthwin had sent Bede a valuable, personal gift.[14]

[10] Bede – along with the others – would have remembered Gregory the Great's stories in the *Dialogi* (4, 57) of the monks who needed Masses offered so that they could be released from their sins.

[11] If pressed for a basis for this belief he could have called up texts such as Jn 8.7; Rom. 5.12; 7.17; 20; m23; 8.10; Heb. 4.15; or 1 Jn 1.8.

[12] That penitence could never be perfect was a fact of life for those who reflected upon it; and so some *post mortem* punishment for sin was seen as inevitable.

[13] See T. O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and Pastoral Care', in G. R. Evans (ed.), *A History of Pastoral Care* (London: Continuum, 2000), pp. 93–111.

[14] It should be noted that within Roman Catholic popular piety the practice of having multiple Masses celebrated was still a common phenomenon – and has by no means disappeared – until very recently. It was common for sympathy to be expressed by 'having a Mass said' and, having received 'a stipend', the priest signed a 'Mass Card' as evidence of the gift which was then placed on the coffin of the deceased; later in acknowledging this expression of sympathy it was not uncommon for the relatives to have 'a Mass offered' for 'the intentions' of those who had sent them Mass Cards. This interaction is not unlike that of Cuthbert and Cuthwin. Equally, it was common – and still occurs – that someone would leave a sum of money in his/her will for Masses to be said for the repose of their soul with fixed stipend for each (e.g. 'I bequeath £100 for Masses for the repose of my soul at a stipend of £1 each') which was seen as a form of 'spiritual providence'.

This notion of a celebration of the Eucharist as having a *quantum* of spiritual effect (for as such it could be multiplied) in relationship to either the granting of the divine favour in the form of forgiveness or as some sort of countervailing balance to the effects of sin (which itself could be imagined in quantities) is alien to most of us.[15] It seems to offend both our post-Reformation theologies and our religious sense that the divine goodness should be referred to in such horse-trading terms. However, we shall see that it was firmly part of Bede's eucharistic theology; he saw it in other churches with which he was in contact; and it was firmly grounded in a most popular writing of one of his favourite popes: Gregory the Great.

Gregory, offering support to a well-established practice, tells two stories whose purpose was to show Peter, his interlocutor, that there were ways by which living people could confer benefits on the dead. The Mass (*sacra oblatio hostiae salutaris*) can bring remission of sins *post mortem* and he demonstrates this with the story of Bishop Felix of Centum Cella who knew a priest who was asked by a spirit in human form to offer Mass for his forgiveness, and then a second story from Gregory's own monastery where a dead monk named Justus was released from his sins by the sacrifice being offered on 30 consecutive days.[16] In both cases, the celebrations of the Mass had the desired result.[17]

And from other evidence we know that what is meant here is what is known as a '*missa priuata*' (the notion of the monastic *missa conuentualis* comes into existence in order to be distinct from these private Masses) – a celebration of just a priest and an assistant to answer the responses which was celebrated at one of many altars – simultaneously in order to fit within the *horarium*[18] – in a monastic enclosure. We shall see implications of this practice throughout this paper, but one most significant element needs to be highlighted at the outset. It had a corrosive tendency to reduce the practice of the Christian life, and its spirituality, to being a 'spiritual credit transfer system'.[19] Moreover, it established that system not only in the imagination, but in community practices and law, and even in the architecture within which men, like Bede, lived.[20]

[15] However, it is still official policy in the Roman Catholic Church where it is spoken of as a '*probatum Ecclesiae morem*' (*Code of Canon Law 1983*, c. 945), and praised as a practice (c. 946), and so regulated by law (canons 945–58).

[16] This would give rise to the practice of the 'Thirty Gregorian Masses' of someone who had died; this custom survived among Roman Catholics until the 1960s.

[17] See O'Loughlin, 'Treating the "Private Mass" as Normal'.

[18] Bede thinks of these Masses celebrated individually by the monks as taking place at the hour of terce; see *Historia* 4, 22.

[19] In German two terms have come into currency to describe this approach: '*zählbare Werkfrömmigkeit*' ('a payable works piety') and '*Kumulationserscheinung*' ('the phenomenon of accumulation'); we need a word in English for this attitude which can be readily appreciated, hence my term 'spiritual credit transfer system'.

[20] I have shown how Adomnán imagined side altars around the Holy Sepulchre; and Bede followed him without hesitation both in *Historia* 5,16 and his own *De locis sanctis*; see 'Treating the "Private Mass" as Normal', 344.

Eucharist and sacerdotal identity

The implications of seeing the Eucharist as a work with a *quantum* of effect as the result of a priest's actual celebration was to place an enormous value on the ability to preside, such that priestly ordination could come to be seen in terms of the monk's personal sanctification. To be a monk was a good thing, but to be a priest also, able 'to offer the sacrifice', was better – and as such this awesome ability became the identity of the presbyter; and produced another effect in that the desire to become a presbyter became, *de facto*, a constituent part of the monastic vocation, and we see this sense of identity throughout the *Historia*. For example, in describing the assault of the German tribes Bede notes that throughout Britain they slaughtered priests (*sacerdotes*) among their altars.[21] In dealing with the question of whether a priest can celebrate Mass after a temptation in a dream, Bede, following Gregory, is able to distinguish between a priest (*sacerdos*) having to celebrate due to a pastoral need, and electing to do so [as a *Missa priuata*] when humility suggests he should not, but could receive the 'sacred mystery'. The whole question is framed in terms of the difference in quality in eucharistic participation between that of a priest and a non-priest: the non-priest has a lower level of demand made upon him/her; and someone in orders but not presiding could avail of that lower threshold of internal purity. Ecclesial status is a function of priesthood and the state of purity. Significantly, the act of presiding is described in terms of 'the immolation of the sacred mystery', while the word *sacerdos*, used here, for someone in presbyteral or episcopal orders, is not merely a collective noun but is being thought of as a real description of the relationship of the human actor and the action of 'saying Mass'.[22]

This identification of the presbyter and the activity at an altar is demonstrated in passing in the reference to (Pope) Gregory being summoned from his monastery, 'ordained to the ministry of the altar' and sent as legate to Constantinople.[23] In a similar vein one of the 'performance indicators' of Hild's monastery at Streanaeshalch was that there was no difficulty in finding many monks of the 'ecclesiastical grade' whose value Bede makes explicit as 'that is for the ministry of the altar' (*hoc est altaris officium*).[24] This identification of priest/the act of sacrifice becomes part of the individual's sanctity as in the case of Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. In describing his penitential devotion, Bede concludes: 'so when [Cuthbert] offered the saving victim to God, he did not do so in a raised high voice, but combined it with his gift of a profusion of tears springing from the depths of his breast'.[25] There is a practical aspect of this humility that we today might miss. When many priests celebrated Masses in the same church – often with altars close to one another – one of the most irritating problems, causing discord in a community, was that of those who could not whisper: whose loud voices distracted

[21] 1,15.
[22] 1,27 (IX).
[23] 2,1.
[24] 4,23.
[25] 4,28; and on the significance of his humble tearfulness, see T. O'Loughlin and H. Conrad-O'Briain, 'The "baptism of tears" in early Anglo-Saxon sources' [with Helen], *Anglo-Saxon England* 22 (Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 65–83.

other celebrants and servers. Here Cuthbert is not only engaged in his own penitential prayer while celebrating Mass, but his manner of celebration in a low voice is being commended as a model for others.

Bede's sense of the special identity of those who can offer this sacrifice runs beneath many of the stories he tells us about monasteries such that there is already present in his mind a two-tier monastery of priest-monks and non-priest-monks. But his reference to the Romanization of the tonsure, under King Nechtan, can stand as an example for all: he says that 'all the ministers of the altar and the monks' were tonsured at one time.[26] While it is possible that this distinction refers to non-monastic clergy and monks, it is far more likely that 'minister of the altar' is such a well-defined dignity for Bede that it formed his primary group, and 'monks' covered all the rest.[27]

The value of 'altars'

The notions of 'Eucharist', 'priesthood' and 'offering sacrifice' are virtually interchangeable in the *Historia* coming together at one physical point: an altar. Following up the references to altars, therefore, allows us to see another aspect of Bede's view of the Eucharist and, indeed, his cosmology. The first of the questions Augustine poses to Gregory concerns how the offerings brought to the altar are to be divided among the clergy.[28] Inherent in this question lies the notion that priests can take offerings for their work at the altar – something well attested earlier as a practice in Frankish lands[29] – and also that in making this offering the faithful were engaged in a real sacrifice; while at the same time expecting that they could derive benefits, spiritually, through the work of the priests at the altar. Lurking in the shadows of what had been a practical development in Church practice is the general notion of making an offering to priests so that they will make sacrificial/sacerdotal interventions, but also the levitical notion of being ministers of the divine cult, carrying out its sacrifices, and sharing in the fruits of the altar.

This perspective comes into clearer sight in the account of Raedwald's court where there were two altars: one for the Eucharist ('the Christian sacrifice') and the other to offer victims to devils.[30] We are not told what eventually happened to this arrangement but are left to assume it disappeared in the reign of the devout and learnt Sigeberht. What it implies is that Bede sees sacrifice as part of the very nature of the creation and as much a part of life as eating or building a shelter. There is God, the true God, and the other celestial/spiritual beings, demons but imagined as gods, and part of human life was to offer sacrifice, truly and properly to God, but among those yet in darkness

[26] 5,21.

[27] See C. Vogel, 'Deux Conséquences de l'eschatologie Grégorienne: La multipication des Messes Privées et les moines-prêtres', in J. Fontaine, R. Gillet and S. Pellistrandi (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand* (Paris: Colloqucs Internationaux du CNRS., 1986), pp. 267–76.

[28] 1,27 (I).

[29] See C. Vogel, 'Une mutation cultuelle inexpliquée: le passage de l'Eucharistie Communautaire a la Messe Privée', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 54 (1980), pp. 231–50.

[30] 2,15.

the process still occurred but in a misdirected way. The key to this fundamental need to sacrifice was an altar, a basic piece of human 'kit', and the issue was whether such an instrument was being used properly and truly, or perversely. Sacrifice, altars and victims were basic parts of human life; the questions related to whom was the sacrifice made and, if to God, whether it was a perfect or an imperfect sacrifice; whether the cult at the altar was true or false; and whether the victim used was perfect or imperfect. Altars, priesthood and sacrifice could, in our terms, be seen as part of the basic human grammar for dealing with the divine.[31] This notion of choosing between true and false worship can again be found in the story of Cuthbert's dealings with local people in times of plague.[32] At such times many abandoned 'the sacraments of faith' and took to incantations and amulets (*fylacteria*)[33] – the devilish arts – as if these could avert something happening in the creation by God's will. Sacrifice was central to the human response in a divinely governed creation: it could be 'in tune' with that creation and so be heard by God, or it could be 'out of tune', ineffective and involve demonic enslavement. This aside may go a long way towards explaining the development of the notion of Masses 'for special needs' and in times of danger, plague and war: where the action of offering Mass was seen as a direct intervention with God in the light of their predicament.

The altar becomes, therefore, the point of contact of the visible and invisible worlds, and so relics can be venerated at them and the saints invoked. Hence the significance of the celebration of Mass over the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul,[34] the altar dedicated to Gregory in Canterbury with weekly Masses on Saturday for the dead archbishops;[35] Cedd is buried on the right hand side of an altar and there are other graves around it;[36] Willibrord wants relics for churches – presumably for altars;[37] there is an altar near when Wilfrid is buried;[38] while Acca in Hexham seeks relics for altars for the veneration of saints;[39] and, of course, there are several altars around the complex of building surrounding the empty sepulchre in Jerusalem.[40]

This role of altars becomes explicit in one or two places. A temple (Christian or pagan) is consecrated by having an altar set within it. Hence the task of conversion is

[31] If pressed, Bede could no doubt have appealed to the example of St Paul in Athens (Acts 17.22-31); but that is too large a topic for this short chapter.

[32] 4,27.

[33] This word, which must refer to something like an amulet, a sacred protecting object, is taken from Mt. 23.5.

[34] 2,1.

[35] 2,3; that the celebration was held on Saturday is linked to the notion of Saturday being the day of waiting in the tomb which was the paradigm moment for understanding burial.

[36] 3,24; on the significance of being buried there, waiting there for resurrection, see T. O'Loughlin, 'The Tombs of the Saints: their significance for Adomnán', in J. Carey, M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain (eds.), *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 1–14.

[37] 5,11. Bede merely says that they obtained relics for the churches they founded so that, idols ejected, the relics can be installed; Colgrave and Mynors make the comment that 'relics were considered essential to the consecration of a church' and note the parallels of 1.29 and 1,30 (p. 485, n.3); however, where were such relics kept and how were they used? That they were placed in altars – and used in altar-stones – seems an obvious conclusion (see C. E. Pocknee, *The Christian Altar: In History and Today* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1963), pp. 39–41).

[38] 5,19.

[39] 5,20.

[40] 5,19.

one of removing the altars where animals were slaughtered in sacrifice to the devil and replacing it with another altar. Sacrifice continues, but now what is offered is different, its destination is different and it has its own altar.[41] The Eucharist is to Christians what the slaughtering of animals was to pagans, and the death of animals for sacrifice in the Old Law. These are, of course, the words of Gregory to Abbot Mellitus, but that Bede has made them his own can be seen in his description of East Saxons who on returning from idolatry at Bishop Jaruman's instigation 'either abandoned or destroyed the temples and altars they had erected' and replaced them with reopened churches.[42]

Bede gives us one further detail about altars: he thinks of them as made of stone;[43] and consequently he is able to think of them in terms of the altars described for sacrifice under the Old Law: sacrifices may change, but the actual altar is emblematic of the continuing theme of sacrifice.

The Eucharist and intercession *pro uiuis*[44]

Intertwined with the belief that each celebration of the Eucharist is an act of sacrifice by one of God's priests (*sacerdotes*) is the notion that the Eucharist is an event of power in itself: a notion that takes on a formal theological colouring when the Eucharist is referred to in terms of making an act of intercession. The clearest example of this is the miracle of Imma's chains and deliverance. Bede sees this as one of those special wonders that not only must be recorded but which also may, through being known, lead many to salvation.[45] Imma is thought to have died in a battle, but is actually alive and in bondage. But try as they might, each night when his enemies try to chain him, he is released! How, Bede wants us to ask, can this wonder have occurred? The answer lies in the fact that his brother, Tunna, is a priest who on hearing the report of Imma's death 'offered many Masses to unbind his soul'.[46] And Imma realizes this and tells his captors that this is the reason: if he were dead, his brother's Masses for him would be the intercession freeing his soul from its punishments; but as it is the case that he is

[41] 1,30.

[42] 3,30; Bede is more intent on giving this theological insight than hard details of what happened; one can but echo J. M. Wallace-Hadrill's query: 'one would like to know why Jaruman was successful in destroying temples and reopening churches . . '. (*Bede's* Ecclesiastical History of the English People*: A Historical Commentary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, 135)).

[43] 2,14: the stone altar of King Edwin's church in Campodunum survived the church's burning.

[44] On the development of this notion in the actual practice of the liturgy in this period in the insular region, see T. O'Loughlin, 'The *Commemoratio pro vivis* of the Roman Canon: a textual witness to the evolution of western eucharistic theologies?', in J. Day et al. (eds.), *Studia Patristica* (forthcoming).

[45] 4,22; on the form of the Imma story, which significantly for this paper is located in the eucharistic miracles stories of Gregory's *Dialogi*, see W. D. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1994), pp. 44–5.

[46] There is a play in Latin here that is not picked up in Colgrave and Mynors' translation. Bede has *et pro absolutione animae eius sepius missas facere curauit* where *pro absolutione* is usually rendered 'for the absolution of his soul'; however, this assumes that *absolutio* is to be read as the technical theological term (which it did become later), here Bede is relying on its primary meaning of 'unbinding' which relies on the story of Lazarus (Jn 11.1-53) where the new freedom of Lazarus (unbound) begins with the command '*soluite eum et sinite abire*' (11.44). It is this primary meaning of unbinding – fetters and sins – that gives point to Bede's story.

not dead, the power of those Masses is not spent in vain but lead to his material bonds being released. Eventually, he obtained release and met his brother – and the proof that it was the power of his brother's Masses that effected the miracle was that the fetters were loosed at the exact time of the Masses 'through the intercession of his brother and the offering up of the saving Victim'.[47]

Bede wants us to appreciate that 'the power of the Mass' was not limited to the *post mortem* world (where he takes its efficacy for granted) but that it is a force in everyday existence. The Eucharist is an event of power in the world which exists quite independently of the community and its life of prayer; this is an event directed and disposed of by the priest and it is in relation to that event that he makes his intercession because disposing of this power is a real part of his work: when he celebrates, his intercession is powerful before God. The Eucharist does not belong in the Church but is a divine force which is accessed for and by the Church through a priest. That this notion of the Eucharist as a divine force present in the creation is not simply Bede being carried away by a good teaching story can be seen in the way he repeats the information from Adomnán that after Mass each Ascension Day there is a fierce wind in the church on the Mount of Olives.[48] A Mass is a powerful event in both the material creation – though there its effects are usually unseen – and in the spiritual creation.

As an act of intercession the Mass stands out within Bede's thought, but clearly he also thought of it as working in combination with the intercession of the saints. We have seen this link already in his references to relics and altars, but we see it explicitly in his reference to the institution by Pope Gregory of Masses over the bodies of Peter and Paul in Rome.[49] Here the intercessory power of the Mass and the intercessory power of saints – for peace in this life and for deliverance from eternal damnation[50] – can be seen as working together: both serve the same soteriological purpose.[51]

One incidental point needs to be noticed. Bede's reference in the Imma story of the time of the '*oblati*[*o*] *hostiae salutaris*' is an indicator that Bede viewed 'the moment of consecration' within the Eucharistic Prayer as the moment of the sacrifice. This moment was the essence of the whole event; and the liturgy was but its surrounding 'packing'. This view was already well established by Bede's time (though many of its later accompaniments such as the elevation and bells had yet to develop)[52] but it is

[47] The notion of a proof of a connection between a wondrous event and a spiritual event through their simultaneity is taken from Gregory's *Dialogi*; see T. O'Loughlin, '"The Gates of Hell": From Metaphor to Fact', *Milltown Studies* 38 (1996), pp. 98–114.

[48] 5,17; and see T. O'Loughlin, *Adomnán and the Holy Places* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), p. 199.

[49] 2,1.

[50] This is the import of Gregory's additions to the Eucharistic Prayer, quoted by Bede in 2,1, which are an expression of the existential fears of Gregory's own time, and probably those also of Bede. The actual prayer that Bede credits to Gregory, '*Diesque nostros . . .*' may be older than Gregory, but what is certain is that Gregory instructed that the prayer was to be said at every Mass in Rome; See J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)* (New York, NY: Benziger, 1955), p. 2, 180 n. 4, and 185.

[51] On Gregory's existential fears, see R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 51–67. Many modern theologians encountering this prayer (it is still one of the options in the Roman Catholic liturgy) are amazed at its presuppositions, but such amazement is new: for most in the past, because it was there, it was assumed to be sound! But Bede's positive enthusiasm tells us about him and his own fears.

[52] See Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2, 194–201.

important to note how Bede simply accepts this and assumes that while the miracle may cause wonder, this understanding can be taken for granted.

This importance of the Eucharist as a spiritual *quantum* helps us to understand the ubiquity of the Eucharist in Bede's world: he seems to take it for granted that every priest would celebrate a Mass every day. We get a hint of this in the questions posed by Augustine to Gregory,[53] but we see it clearly in Æthelberh bringing a bishop, Paulinus, with her into a pagan territory specifically so that she could have daily Mass which would preserve her from the pollution of pagan contact;[54] while the two martyred priests in Saxony, Hewald the Black and Hewald the White, each 'offer up daily the saving Victim to God'.[55]

Those 'who sleep in the sleep of peace'

That Bede saw the celebration of Masses as a remedy from the bondage produced by sin among those *qui . . . dormiunt in somno pacis* hardly needs to be expressed: we have seen it in the report of his last request and in his story of Imma. It was commonplace in the stories told by Gregory the Great, it fitted with the prayers for the dead in the Eucharistic Prayer, and it had changed monasticism's view of priesthood and their church buildings: one could say that for Bede the Eucharist was as much about the comforting of the death as it was about anything else.[56] However, one item merits special mention: the role of Masses for the dead in Dryhthelm's Vision.[57]

Drythelm is shown neither heaven nor hell but only the 'waiting rooms' full of those who will enter the kingdom on the last day. However, here there is as great a contrast as is imaginable between those, on the one hand, who find themselves in a pleasant plane, the abode of blessed spirits, as a result of lives of good works and penance, and, on the other, those who find themselves in a valley of suffering: in constant alternation between flaming fire and freezing cold. The first is the fruit of the sort of life imagined as the model for imitation of Bede the preacher exhorting a good life; the other is the destiny of those who converted at the moment of death and did not do

[53] 1,27 (IX) where there is the presumption of priest's celebrating when there is no pastoral need for that individual to celebrate.

[54] 2,9.

[55] 5,10; and note that since they did not have an altar – which Bede imagines in stone – they brought with them a specially consecrated board (*tabula*).

[56] This listing, in addition to those already mentioned, illustrates the theme: every Saturday there is a solemn Mass for the deceased archbishops in Canterbury (2,3); at Hefenfelf, each year on the anniversary of Oswald's death, the brethren of Hexham 'offer up the holy sacrifice and oblation on his behalf' (3,2); in all the oratories [note the plural] of Eappa's monastery there are Masses in commemoration of King Oswald (4,14); and Masses are offered in the crypt in Jerusalem for the honoured dead (5.16).

[57] 5,12. There is a vast literature on this passage in Bede, but the overall context is given by E. Gardiner, *Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell: A Sourcebook* (New York, NY: Garland Pub., 1993), pp. 95–7; the best introduction is that in Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's* Ecclesiastical History, pp. 185–6; for an introduction as to how it is viewed within the history of theology, see J. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 113–8; and for recent work, see A. Rabin, 'Bede, Dryhthelm, and the Witness to the Other World: Testimony and Conversion in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Modern Philology,* 106 (2009), pp. 375–98.

penance, suffering until the last moment, and is the stuff of the preacher upbraiding his audience. This latter group, jumping perpetually between fire and ice, are helped by the living by prayer, fasting and alms – the traditional troika of intercession[58] – and *maxime celebratio missarum*. This last action is thereby affirmed as the highest form of assistance and charity: it saves someone from an agony that will last until the end of time. There is literally no one, who can be helped, who has greater need: and Masses 'help many of them to get free even before the day of judgement'. Faced with a utopia and a dystopia, the human being has no surer safeguard of passage from one to another than the celebration of many Masses.

There is nothing that is theologically new or startling in Bede's presentation of the issue – he would no doubt have pointed out how closely it could be aligned with similar stories in Gregory; but what is arresting in Bede is the descriptive power of the vision and the simplicity with which its teaching is drawn. For while theoretically the vision is a warning to those who might put off conversion until the last moment; practically its message for those who hear the account is that they, the living, should help their brothers and sisters, clerics and lay, to be freed from their suffering – and Masses were the most effective aid they could receive. This vision gives us an index of the value that Bede laid on his other references to Masses for the dead, how he understood their effect, and his own final anxiety that his brethren would celebrate Masses for him. In an uncertain and frightening life, Masses were an important means to long-term consolation.

The Eucharist as *uiaticum*

A feature of the *Historia* is the number of occasions when Bede mentions the reception of Eucharist before the journey of death. Chad prepares for the moment of death, already announced by a heavenly choir, by receiving 'the body and blood of the Lord', and then, released from 'the prison of the body', is brought by angels to the joys of heaven.[59] In Eappa's monastery a little sick boy had a vision at the second hour of Peter and Paul warning him of his death, but that he will live until after Mass (at the time of terce) when 'having received the viaticum of the body and blood of the Lord' (*ac uiatico dominici corporis ac sanguinis accepto*) he will be taken to heavenly joys. So later, a priest believing the boy's story ordered that a part of 'the sacrifice and oblation' be carried to the boy. And one effect, Bede notes, of this was that there was greater awareness of the importance of Masses among that people.[60] Hild's last act, at cockcrow moments before her death, was to receive viaticum (*percepto uiatico sacrosanctae communionis*) and give a final exhortation to her sisters.[61] Cædmon, the poet, at the point of death has to insist on viaticum being brought to him – for those near him do not believe he is so close to death – then strengthening himself with

[58] Its origins as a troika can be traced to Mt. 6:2-8 and 16-18.
[59] 4,3; the image of the body as a prison is also used in 4,9.
[60] 4,14.
[61] 4,23.

the heavenly viaticum (*sicque se caelesti muniens uiatico*) he prepared for his journey, blessed himself and died a quiet death.[62] While Egbert, the great promoter of paschal uniformity, having celebrated the solemn Mass of the feast of Easter (on the correct day) is then brought to an endless celebration with the Lord – so, in effect, he had given himself viaticum.[63]

The importance of viaticum to Bede is also brought out in other ways. One of the punishments of God is sudden death – precluding repentance and viaticum – and so people pray that they may not suffer in such a death.[64] The saints, by contrast, are given warning, are prepared, and die peacefully. Meanwhile, the wicked monk, who refused repentance, dies without receiving saving viaticum (*sine uiatico salutis*) and is buried far from the other monks,[65] and no one has bothered to say Masses (*missas facere*) or pray for him for he has been brought to 'the gates of hell'.[66] And the importance of being ready to offer viaticum in the monastery can be gauged from the story of Cædmon. He asks if they have the Eucharist in the house (*si eucharistiam intus haberent*) and his respondents parry the question by saying what need has he of the Eucharist since he is not near death.[67] It is the common assumption of all, that there is reservation of a particle[68] for viaticum, and indeed the monks can think of no other reason for having the Eucharist in the house.[69]

We have seen Bede's concern with the Mass as a means of deliverance from the suffering of the dead on their journey towards heaven, and that its practical effects in this life – such as Imma's fetters falling loose – are but an anticipation of that more significant *post mortem* release; so too he sees viaticum as a means along that journey: it brings with it the sort of death that allows the soul to rest in peace awaiting resurrection. Seeing life as a journey towards either an eternal damnation (recalling Gregory's petition: '*ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi*')[70] or a damnation that would last until the Second Coming (recalling Dryhthelm's vision),[71] the Eucharist, in all its manifestations, could be seen as the surest means of progress and redress – even redress for those dead who were not reprobate. In view of this we can appreciate the opening line of the Anglo-Saxon poem the dying Bede recited: 'Facing that enforced journey, no man can be more prudent than he has good call to be.'[72] Yet, ironically, there is no description of Bede's own reception of viaticum!

[62] 4,24
[63] 5,22.
[64] 4,14.
[65] On the significance of where he is buried, see O'Loughlin, 'The Tombs of the Saints'.
[66] 5,14; on the practical nature of 'the gates of hell' in the light of Isidore's cosmology in *De natura rerum* (the book which Bede was working on just before his own death), see O'Loughlin, '"The Gates of Hell"'.
[67] 4,24.
[68] See the description of what the priest sent to the sick boy in 4,14.
[69] On this last point, and this whole section on viaticum, see W. H. Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1917), pp. 127–9.
[70] See 2,1.
[71] See 5,12.
[72] Cuthbert, *Epistola de obitu Bedae*, the translation is Colgrave's (p. 583).

Purity and gender

One issue regarding the Eucharist as it is portrayed in the *Historia* that has been the subject of scholarly attention has been with regard to its reception/celebration by those who have committed a variety of sexual sins in so far as these are dealt with in a letter of Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury.[73] In this short paper it would be useless to look again at this material, but it must be noted that this interface of the holiness/awesomeness of the Eucharist with the sinful impurity arising from human sexuality – perceived as 'fallen' – is part and parcel of Bede's *mentalité*. But however one reads Gregory's answers,[74] the more fundamental issue is that these were significant questions for Bede[75]: the Eucharist whose holy power Bede extols in his stories was also a source of danger to all who did not appreciate the need for purity – and the greatest threat to such purity arose from ordinary human sexuality. So, if the Eucharist was powerful and consoling, it was also fear-instilling.

Conclusion

Bede wrote many comments on the Eucharist in his books of exegesis and in his sermons, and compared with those comments this paper's interest in the multiplication of Masses, priestly powers, spiritual credit transfer systems and the notion of the Eucharist as an object possessing a *quantum* of divine grace may seem to be dwelling on the downside. Yet this is the *mentalité* underlying the *Historia* and it probably ran far deeper in Bede the man and his community than many of the ideas found in his treatises. Here lies the dilemma of all writing on the Eucharist: long before the lecture began or the book opened, Christians had fears and expectations, assumptions and blind spots, located in and arising from their communities' practices. This communal experience both formed and deformed the tradition.

[73] 1,29. These relatively recent items deal both with the topic and introduce the older literature: R. Means, 'Ritual Purity and the Influence of Gregory the Great in the Early Middle Ages', in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 31–43; D. Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 14–34 and 61–80; and T. Berger, *Gender Differences and the Making of Liturgical History: Lifting a Veil on Liturgy's Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 107–25.

[74] See Berger, Gender Differences, for a variety of interpretations.

[75] That this is the case is seen in that he knew them as 'a little book' (*libellus*) of question and answers (*Historia* 2,1) – see Means, 'Ritual Purity' on its diffusion as such – and then chose to include them in their entirety in the *Historia*.

5

Women, Prayer and Preaching in the Early English Church

Sarah Foot

Several of the writings of Sr Benedicta Ward have explored aspects of the spirituality of the first generations of English Christians, among them most importantly her study of the thought of the Venerable Bede, first published in 1990 and reprinted more than once.[1] Less well known is a short essay that Sr Benedicta contributed to the proceedings of a conference held in St Hilda's College in Oxford in 1993, published as *Women, the Book and the Godly*. There she examined Bede's relationship with educated women in Anglo-Saxon England by looking at his commentary on the *Canticle of Habakkuk*.[2] Bede's text provides a useful focus for this essay in Sr Benedicta's honour. It will pursue themes that have dominated her writing by considering the place of prayer in the lives of women who adopted the monastic life in early Anglo-Saxon England, but will also investigate those women's involvement in the ministry of teaching and preaching.

Bede *On Habakkuk*

Bede's commentary *On The Canticle of Habakkuk* is the only one of his exegetical works which he dedicated to a woman; by his own account, Bede wrote it in response to the request of an unknown nun, whom he addressed as his 'dearly beloved sister in Christ'. She had asked him to expound the canticle, which she knew well because, as Bede reported, its verses (the so-called 'prayer of the prophet': Hab. 3. 2-19) were recited after the psalms at the morning office every Friday.[3] The significance of the canticle's regular liturgical use was obvious: Bede saw this text as 'mainly a proclamation of the

[1] Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990; reprinted 1998 and 2002).

[2] B. Ward, '"To my dearest sister": Bede and the educated woman', in Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (eds.), *Women, the Book and the Godly* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 105–111.

[3] J. E. Hudson (ed.), Bede, *In Habacuc*, preface, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina [hereafter CCSL] 119B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983), pp. 377–409, at p. 381; Seán Connolly (transl.), *Bede On Tobit and On the Canticle of Habakkuk* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 65–95, §1, p. 67 [hereafter *In Hab.* cited by chapter and verse of the biblical text, with page number from Hudson's edition, and then chapter, section and page of Connolly's translation].

mysteries of the Lord's passion', and thus particularly apt for recitation on the day on which the church each week recalls Christ's death on the cross. But in Bede's opinion, the canticle does more than remind its readers of the passion; 'it also gives a mystical account of Christ's incarnation, resurrection and ascension into heaven, as well as of the faith of the Gentiles and the unbelief of the Jews'.[4] Sr Benedicta argued that Bede used his reflections on Habakkuk in order to speak 'truth to his co-workers in the art of arts, prayer'.[5] He did not spend much time in literal explanation of the text (as he might have done for a different audience), but focused instead on the wider theological significance of these verses, recited weekly by his 'dearly beloved sister and virgin of Christ'.[6] In so doing, he reflected a good deal on the work of preachers, especially those whose teaching 'outwardly proceeds from that fount of wisdom whereby they themselves are inwardly more wonderfully enlightened by the contemplation of heavenly joys', in other words, those whose teaching and preaching rested on a foundation in prayer.[7]

Bede focused throughout on the inner spiritual meaning of the prophet's words, bearing in mind the needs of his female reader, whom he envisaged using his interpretation to inform her own meditation on the text she knew well through its weekly recitation. Thus, in reflecting on the prophet's words 'I contemplated your works and grew fearful' (Hab. 3. 2), Bede explained that the works in question were those by which Christ redeemed the world (through his death on the cross), going on to observe: 'and clearly the more intently one reflects upon these works, the more one trembles over the actions of one's frailty'.[8] The second half of the same verse ('When my soul is deeply troubled, in your wrath you will remember mercy'), caused Bede to advise his reader: 'And here one must seriously meditate upon the wonderful swiftness of God's mercy'. Quoting Psalm 31 (32. 5), he reminded the holy sister that although there may be indulgence for the smallest sins, 'the graver our guilty actions are, the greater and longer the penance and tears and alms they call for'.[9] He emphasized the value of reflection on scripture, of observing the teaching it offers and following the example of the Jewish prophets: 'as we read or heed their words or examples, the love or knowledge of the truth is more perfectly engendered in our heart'.[10] It was 'not merely in the writings of the prophets that the Lord preceded the word of preaching, but also in the apostles when they announce to the world that the good news of the coming of Christ had already been realized'.[11] Listening to preaching reinforces the hearer's understanding of truth so that 'the hearts of the earthly-minded are jolted into doing penance for their deviations'.[12] Bede could similarly have advised any monastic audience of the merits of scriptural reading and of adhering to the advice of holy teachers (*doctores sancti*); he urged the dedicatee (and, presumably, her fellow sisters in Christ) to put their learning to good effect, for the salvation of their own souls.

[4] Bede, *In Hab.*, preface, p. 381, transl. §1: 4, p. 65.
[5] Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 107.
[6] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 19, pp. 4–9; transl. §38: 26, p. 95; Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 108.
[7] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 10, p. 396; transl. §24: 16, p. 82.
[8] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 2, p. 383; transl. §3: 4, p. 67.
[9] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 2, pp. 384–5; transl. §6: 7–8, p. 70.
[10] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 3, p. 387; transl. §7: 28, p. 72.
[11] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 5, p. 389; transl. §12: 3, p. 74.
[12] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 6, p. 389; transl. §13: 5, p. 75.

Habakkuk's prophecy that the 'earth shall be cleft by rivers' (Hab. 3. 9) Bede explained as a reference to the rivers of living water of which St John spoke in his gospel (Jn 7. 38). He encouraged the nun to persevere in her prayers and contemplation in order to achieve the result that[13]

> the earth is cleft by these rivers when the hearts of the earthly-minded, watered by the words of saving doctrine, wear down, by humbling themselves, the hardness of their unbelief, and open up the bay of inward reflection which had been ruinously closed, to welcome the words of healing reproof or exhortation.

Bede meant to console his dedicatee, reminding her that when the hearts of sinners are torn to confess the truth through the frequent addresses of teachers, 'they see the Lord in the meantime through faith, and grieve at having withdrawn from him through sin'.[14] He assured her that her contemplative endeavours would ultimately bear fruit, for he promised, when the grief of repentance is over, even former sinners will 'see the Lord more clearly in the life to come in clear view and rejoice in his blessed vision forever'.[15] At the end of this passage, Bede's focus shifted from the promises offered to those who heeded the advice of teachers and repented of their sins towards the positive benefit for others (not just the repentant themselves) to be provided by those who adhere to such teachings: 'after the earthly-minded conscience is torn to repentance, it immediately makes such progress by the gift of divine grace that it can itself produce streams of doctrine for others and water their parched hearts either by its example or word (*uel exemplo uel sermone*) so as to bring forth the fruits of virtues'.[16] Addressing his audience directly, Bede here implied that his reader also – if practised in the art of contemplation – could 'by example or by word' convey doctrine to others. Again, seeking to explain what the prophet meant by saying 'sprinkling waters on its ways' (Hab. 3. 10) Bede extended his focus beyond those who teach to encompass those teachers' audience, and the merits of their own works:[17]

> On its ways, on the other hand, means in their works, i.e. those of the teachers themselves or their hearers. For they sprinkle waters on their ways when, wherever they go, as well as preaching orally, they show examples of upright living to those whose eyes are always upon them. They sprinkle water on the ways of the spectators too when they show them in advance, both by precept and lifestyle, what pathways of conduct they follow.

We have already observed that Bede devoted much of his text to advise his female reader to listen to the teaching of male preachers. Yet here he goes further in arguing that this religious woman should not just listen, but should act on the teaching she has heard.

[13] Bede, *In Hab*., 3: 9, pp. 394–5; transl. §22: 5–6, p. 80.
[14] Bede, *In Hab*., 3: 10, p. 395; transl. §23: 3, p. 80.
[15] Bede, *In Hab*., 3: 10, p. 395; transl. §23: 4, p. 80.
[16] Bede, *In Hab*., 3: 10, p. 395; transl. §23: 9–10, p. 80.
[17] Bede, *In Hab*., 3: 10, p. 396; transl. §24: 10–11, pp. 81–2.

Is it far-fetched to imagine that Bede envisaged that the nun for whom he wrote was herself engaged in oral preaching, or teaching as well as in bringing others to faith by her example of holy living? Bede referred to women preachers in his commentary *On Ezra and Nehemiah*,[18] and he talked in more than one other text about the inclusivity of the terms 'priest' and 'pastor' to encompass not just those in holy orders but all the faithful who lived devoutly and taught well.[19] He may thus have intended to commend the sister of Christ for whom he wrote this commentary when he asserted: 'the wonderful thing the holy preachers proclaim to us outwardly proceeds, of course, from that fount of wisdom whereby they themselves are inwardly more wonderfully enlightened by the contemplation of heavenly joys'.[20] By means of her incessant contemplation of eternal bliss the holy sister, too, had been watered by the ultimate source of all wisdom: God himself. Bede offered further praise for the text's recipient in the passage where he observed that Christ's great deeds, the mysteries he revealed, the precepts he laid down and the rewards he promised become known to the whole world, and 'holy teachers, because they are children of light and the things they do or say by virtue of his gift, shine brightly by their light and brilliance'.[21] It was the nun (probably abbess of a community of religious sisters) who shone with the light of the gospel truth that she both expounded and lived out by her own example.

Bede constantly stressed in this commentary that the action of preaching and teaching must be based on the bedrock of prayer and contemplation. For, 'whatever a holy man utters is wholly and entirely a prayer to God', and everything that is done to please the Lord is intercession.[22] Sr Benedicta rightly emphasized the centrality of the art of prayer in Bede's *On Habakkuk* and drew attention to Bede's consistent focus on the importance of contemplation as a means towards wisdom and understanding.[23] Bede explained that when the prophet said that his strength was shaken beneath him (Hab. 3. 16), he saw himself raised above himself while rapt in contemplation of the heavenly mysteries, 'and the higher he rose in the light of contemplation, the more imperfect he saw himself in merit of action; yet his fear and trembling did not remain without consolation, for Christ rendered them lighter'.[24] Thus, he advised those who would be elect to 'renounce the craving for trifling things and strive with total concentration of mind and by daily progress in good works to go up and change their abode for the fellowship of those who went before them'. All the elect, although undergoing hardship in this world, will have rest in the Lord because 'the heavier the burden they carry in this life, the higher up they will go, after their afflictions to the eternal fellowship of their heavenly compatriots'.[25] Without minimizing the

[18] Bede, *In Ezram*, I [2: 65], ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), p. 257; transl. Scott DeGregorio, *Bede On Ezra and Nehemiah* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), p. 32.
[19] Alan Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform', in P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 130–53, at p. 131; Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 108. See further below.
[20] Bede, *In Hab*, 3: 10, p. 396; transl. §24: 16, p. 82.
[21] Bede, *In Hab*, 3: 11, p. 397; transl. §26: 11, p. 83.
[22] Bede, *In Hab*, 3: 16, p. 402; transl. §33: 11–12, p. 88.
[23] Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 111.
[24] Bede, *In Hab*, 3: 16, p. 403; transl. §35: 8, p. 89.
[25] Bede, *In Hab*, 3: 16, p. 405; transl. §36: 26, pp. 90–1.

difficulty of sustaining the religious observance that he commended, Bede offered some consolation for his female reader as to the heavenly joys she might ultimately hope to share. At the end of the canticle, as Bede demonstrated, the prophet returned to his beginning: for it happens that the one who faithfully 'reflects upon the works of the Lord when he appeared in the flesh', despises the things of the world and avoids its allurements, 'he both sings the praises of his grace in the present time' and 'never leaves off singing in the life to come because he has been victorious'.[26] Explaining that Habakkuk's name means 'embracing' Bede concluded by arguing that 'it is manifest that he who bears witness that he gloried and rejoiced in him alone, embraced the Lord with the inward love of his heart and clung close to him'. So, Bede continued, 'dearly beloved sister and virgin of Christ, would that we, too, by loving him, might become worthy of such a name'. For if we embrace him with our whole heart, soul and strength, 'so he will deign to clasp us in the arms of his love'.[27]

Through this close reading of the text of Habakkuk's canticle, emphasizing its inner spiritual meaning, Bede gave his female dedicatee and her sisters in Christ much opportunity for reflection. He clearly envisaged a learned readership, able to identify his allusions to scripture and to profit from the advice he had to offer, not only in their interior lives of prayer, but also seemingly in their works and deeds. He must have written for one of the many female monastic communities found all over England in Bede's day, one actively engaged in the provision of spiritual care and religious education. Yet we do not know either the identity of the nun for whom Bede wrote this commentary, nor when it was composed, except that Bede included it in the list of his exegetical writings which he supplied at the end of his *Ecclesiastical History* (completed *c.* 731).[28] From the affection (and respect) in which Bede clearly held her as a 'sister and virgin in Christ' and his allusion to their shared liturgical practice (of reciting this canticle on Friday mornings), we might imagine that she lived in a religious house in Bede's native Northumbria, but she might equally have belonged to a community farther afield with which Bede had previously corresponded.[29]

Female religious houses in early Anglo-Saxon England

By the early eighth century monastic congregations of women – or of women and men living together in double houses under the authority of an abbess – were found in every kingdom of Anglo-Saxon England.[30] The situation that had in the 630s sent the earliest potential female adherents to the monastic life overseas to join nunneries in

[26] Bede, *In Hab*, 3: 19, p. 408; transl. §38: 17, 20, p. 94.
[27] Ibid., p. 409; transl. §38: 26–7, p. 95.
[28] Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds.), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Book V, chapter 24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, corrected reprint, 1991), pp. 568–9 [hereafter cited as *HE*, by book and chapter number].
[29] Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 105.
[30] Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women I: the Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 35–60, for discussion of the institution of the double house see pp. 49–56.

Gaul because of the complete absence of religious communities in England had long since been rectified.[31] From the middle years of the seventh century female houses had sprung up all over England, many led by women from local ruling royal families.[32] Thus in Northumbria, the great abbey at Whitby was established in 657 under the abbacy of Hild, a relative of the first Christian king of Northumbria, Edwin.[33] In East Anglia, Æthelthryth, daughter of the East Anglian king, Anna, founded a house at Ely in 673;[34] at around the same time, royal Kentish women established nunneries at Lyminge, Minster-in-Thanet and Minster in Sheppey in Kent;[35] and Bishop Eorcenwald created a nunnery at Barking in Essex for his sister, Æthelburh, to rule as abbess. In Wessex the sister of King Ine, Cuthburg, established a nunnery at Wimborne at some point before 718.[36]

Any one of these houses (or the others scattered across England by the 720s, several of which also had royal connections) might have been home to the virgin nun for whom Bede wrote this commentary;[37] we know that he had some acquaintance with nuns from Barking, Coldingham, Ely and Whitby, but we need not restrict our search for his correspondent to those institutions. Wherever she came from, this nun belonged to a community that used the Canticle of Habakkuk as a liturgical text. The *Rule of St Benedict* recommends the use of scriptural canticles in the morning office and Bede attributed his correspondent's familiarity with the text to the fact that this canticle was sung every ferial Friday.[38] Further, in the Roman rite the ceremony of readings on Good Friday involved the singing of responsories based on the opening verses of the Canticle of Habakkuk.[39] We should thus seek Bede's audience for his commentary in a female religious house familiar with Roman liturgical practice, or perhaps, as Sr Benedicta suggested, one connected with the Romanizing habits of Bishop Wilfrid.[40] The intellectual demands the text placed on its reader indicate that Bede envisaged her to have a high level of education, not merely sufficient to enable her to read and understand his commentary, but arguably also to teach its precepts to others.

[31] Bede, *HE*, III. 8, pp. 236–9. Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 18.
[32] Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 17–46.
[33] Bede, *HE*, III. 24, IV. 23, pp. 290–3, 404–15. Hild's father, Hereric, was nephew to King Edwin; P. Hunter Blair, 'Whitby as a centre of learning in the seventh century', in M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (eds.), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3–32, at p. 4.
[34] Bede, *HE*, IV. 19, pp. 390–7; Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 178.
[35] Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 25–6; see also D. W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982).
[36] Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women II: Female Religious Communities in England, 871–1066* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 233–4.
[37] See the map in Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 38.
[38] Timothy Fry (ed.), *RB 1980: the Rule of St. Benedict in English*, chapter 13 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), pp. 208–9.
[39] Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'Christ over the beasts and the Agnus Dei: two multivalent panels on the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses', in P. E. Szarmach and V. D. Oggins (eds.), *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 377–403, at p. 385.
[40] Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 107.

Bede and the educated woman

One local female house in Bede's native Northumbria stands out above all for the renown of the learning of its inhabitants: the abbey at Whitby, founded by King Oswiu of Northumbria. In 655, following his victory at the battle of *Winwæd*, Oswiu gave his baby daughter, Ælfflæd, to be consecrated to God in perpetual virginity under the care of Hild, abbess of Hartlepool. Two years later, he gave Hild ten hides of land on which she undertook the building of an establishment of regular life in a monastery at *Streanæshalch*.[41] According to Bede, Hild stood out among religious women in her own generation for her outstanding devotion and grace. Rarely among religious women in the *Historia*, Hild was described by Bede as 'ancilla', using the word that Luke put into the mouth of the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation.[42] Not only did Hild offer an exemplary model of holy living to all in her monastery, 'she also provided an opportunity for salvation and repentance to many who lived far away and who heard the happy story of her industry and virtue'.[43] In Hild's day, the double monastery at Whitby became celebrated as a centre of learning. Aidan and the other devout men who visited her regularly loved her above all for her innate wisdom (*pro insita ei sapientia*);[44] Hild so effectively compelled all those under her direction to devote time to both the study of holy Scripture and the performance of good works that the abbey produced a ready supply of men suitable for ordination to the priesthood.[45] Six men from this abbey went on to become bishops, three to hold office in Northumbria, two among the Hwicce and one in Wessex.[46] Whitby also famously produced the man known as the first English poet: the herdsman Cædmon, who had lacked any capacity for versifying until in a dream he miraculously received the divine inspiration enabling him to compose verses and write a hymn in praise of creation. Hild encouraged him to renounce his secular habit and take monastic vows, introducing him into the community and having him taught the course of sacred history. Although he never learnt to read, Cædmon turned his teaching into sacred verses on a range of subjects

[41] Bede, *HE* III. 24, pp. 290–3; Hunter Blair, 'Whitby', pp. 8–9. The place *Streanæshalch* has been identified with Whitby since the twelfth century: C. Fell, 'Hild, abbess of *Streonæshalch*', in H. Bekker-Nielsen, et al. (eds.), *Hagiography and Medieval Literature* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 76–99, at pp. 82–5. For the possibility that it might rather be identified with Strensall, near York, see P. S. Barnwell, L. A. S. Butler and C. J. Dunn, 'The confusion of conversion: Streanæshalch, Strensall and Whitby and the Northumbrian church', in M. Carver (ed.), *The Cross goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press; Boydell, 2003), pp. 311–26.

[42] Bede, *HE* IV. 23, pp. 410–11: 'praefata Christi ancella et abbatissa Hild'; cf. Lk. 1: 38: 'Ecce ancilla Domini'. Bede used the same noun to denote all the Whitby nuns, summoned to Hild's deathbed (*HE* IV. 23, pp. 412–13), and to refer to the novices of that community, who lived at the remotest part of the monastic enclosure: ibid., pp. 214–15. He also twice called the nuns of Barking *ancellae*: *HE*, IV. 7-8, pp. 356–9. I am grateful to Máirín Mac Carron for drawing this point to my attention.

[43] Bede, *HE*, IV. 23, pp. 410–11.

[44] Ibid., pp. 408–9. Fell, 'Hild', p. 86.

[45] Ibid., pp. 408–9. Hunter Blair, 'Whitby', pp. 25–9.

[46] Ibid., pp. 408–11; Bosa, bishop of York 678–706; John of Beverley, bishop of Hexham 687–706, and then York to *c.* 714; and Wilfrid II of York, *c.* 714–735; Tatfrith was appointed to the see of Worcester, *c.* 675, but died before he could be consecrated; Oftfor, bishop of Worcester 691-c. 693; Ætla, became bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames in Wessex *c.* 660.

from the incarnation, passion, resurrection and ascension to the Day of Judgement, pains of hell and joys of heaven.[47]

Clearly, therefore, the abbey of Whitby possessed the sort of intellectual environment and commitment to learning and to the communication of the fundamentals of Christian teaching to a wider society with no knowledge of books that would have made it a fitting recipient of Bede's interpretation of the Canticle of Habakkuk. But Hild had learnt her particular brand of monastic observance from Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne, who – with other religious men – had visited her at Hartlepool to offer instruction and advice.[48] Hild's loyalties thus lay on the Irish side at the Synod of Whitby in 664, the occasion when – following some heated debate – the whole Northumbrian church agreed to follow Roman ecclesiological practice. Although Whitby's abbess will certainly have adhered obediently to the agreement reached over the celebration of the date of Easter, we cannot know how quickly after the synod she would have adapted all aspects of her community's liturgy to conform to Roman standards.[49] Yet Bede composed his commentary at least 40 years later and we might reasonably anticipate that Whitby had by then moved nearer towards the mainstream.

However slowly Abbess Hild abandoned the Irish customs in which she had first been trained, her successors had different allegiances. After Hild's death in 680, the abbey of Whitby was ruled jointly by Eanflæd, widow of King Oswiu, and her daughter Ælfflæd.[50] Eanflæd, the daughter of King Edwin, the first Christian king in Northumbria, was related (through her mother, Æthelburh) to the Kentish royal house, and had always adhered to Roman not Irish practice. While married she had maintained a Kentish chaplain called Romanus, who followed catholic observance; her refusal to celebrate Easter with her husband Oswiu was indeed, according to Bede, a key factor in precipitating the calling of the synod in 664.[51] Romanus spoke there on the Roman side of the argument, together with one of Eanflæd's former protégés, Wilfrid, whom she had sent from Northumbria to Kent to advance his education, commending him to her kinsman King Eorcenberht.[52] Even had some vestiges of Irish observance continued at Whitby to the end of Hild's lifetime, Eanflæd would not have failed to complete the transition to catholic usage once she took charge of the abbey, particularly given her closeness to Bishop Wilfrid. Her daughter, the virgin nun Ælfflæd, who ruled the monastery on her own following her mother's death (sometime after 685) was clearly an educated woman; she continued the tradition of learning and teaching for which Whitby had become famous under Abbess Hild. Bede reported that having first been a pupil Ælfflæd later became a teacher (*magistra*) of life under the Rule, and later called her *deuota doctrix* (devout teacher).[53] Since we know that she had

[47] Bede, *HE*, IV. 24, pp. 416–19; Hunter Blair, 'Whitby', pp. 22–5.
[48] Bede, *HE*, IV. 23, pp. 406–9.
[49] Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 107.
[50] Bede, *HE*, IV. 26, pp. 428–31.
[51] Bede, *HE*, III. 25, pp. 296–7. Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Batsford, 1972, 3rd edn, 1991), pp. 105–6.
[52] Bertram Colgrave (ed.), *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, chapter 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927; paperback edn, 1985), pp. 8–9; Hunter Blair, 'Whitby', pp. 20–1. For a wider perspective on the synod see Mayr-Harting, *The Coming*, pp. 103–13.
[53] Bede, *HE*, III. 24, pp. 292–3; IV. 26, pp. 428–9.

a close friendship with St Cuthbert,[54] Ælfflæd may have shared Abbess Hild's antipathy towards Bishop Wilfrid in her youth; but in maturity – perhaps influenced by her mother – Ælfflæd became more favourably disposed towards the controversial bishop of York. She took a direct role in various attempts to make peace between Wilfrid and successive Northumbrian kings (her half-brother Aldfrith and his successor Osred), being consulted by both Archbishop Theodore and his successor Berhtwald (692–731). Her advocacy earned the commendation of Wilfrid's biographer, who twice described her as *sapientissima virgo* and also called her 'ever the comforter and best counsellor of the kingdom'.[55] One piece of Latin attributed to Ælfflæd survives: a letter in a rather florid prose which she wrote early in the eighth century to Abbess Adola of Pfalzel (near Trier) commending another Anglo-Saxon abbess who would be travelling through Germany on a pilgrimage to the seats of the apostles in Rome, and asking for the German nun's prayers.[56] The earliest surviving life of Pope Gregory the Great written at Whitby probably also dates to the time of Ælfflæd; even though it does not testify to any great Latinity among the nuns of Whitby, it does provide further evidence for the continued interest in learning there beyond Hild's time, as do the styluses and book-clasps excavated from Whitby.[57] Since Ælfflæd did not die until *c*. 714, aged nearly 60, she could have been the dearly beloved sister and virgin of Christ to whom Bede dedicated his commentary *On Habakkuk*.[58]

If we look beyond the bounds of Northumbria for a female community sufficiently learnt to have benefited from Bede's commentary, we might consider the abbey of Barking in Essex. Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne, dedicated a lengthy treatise on virginity to the nuns of Barking *c*. 700, addressing the women as 'flowers of the Church, monastic sisters, scholarly pupils, pearls of Christ, jewels of Paradise and participants in the celestial homeland'.[59] The complexity of Aldhelm's prose placed substantial intellectual demands on Abbess Hildelith and her sisters in Christ; their capacity to handle its convoluted periods and esoteric vocabulary witnesses to the remarkable extent of their education.[60] Bede devoted five chapters of his *Ecclesiastical History* to an account of the abbey of Barking, its early abbesses and various miracles performed there.[61] He painted a picture of a devout and observant

[54] Anon, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, book III, ch. 6, IV. 10, in Bertram Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of St Cuthbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940, paperback edn, 1985), pp. 102–5, 126–7; Bede, *Vita S Cuthberti*, ch. 23, ibid., pp. 232–3.

[55] *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, chs 59 and 60, pp. 128–9, and 132–3; A. Thacker, 'Ælfflæd (654–714)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8622, accessed 9 June 2013].

[56] M. Tangl (ed.), *St Bonifatii et Lullii Epistolae*, MGH Epistolae selectae I (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916), no. 8, pp. 3–4; Hunter Blair, 'Whitby', pp. 29–30.

[57] Hunter Blair, 'Whitby', p. 30; A. Breeze, 'Did a woman write the Whitby Life of St Gregory?', *Northern History*, 49 (2012), pp. 345–50.

[58] For a different reading of Ælfflæd's career arguing that Bede deliberately underplayed the abbess's political significance see Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women,* pp. 179–207.

[59] Aldhelm, *De uirginitate*, §lx, in R. Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi, XV (Berlin: apud Weidmannos, 1919), pp. 228–323, at p. 323; M. Lapidge, and M. Herren (transl.), *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1979), p. 132.

[60] Sarah Foot, *'Flores ecclesiae:* Women in early Anglo-Saxon monasticism', in Gert Melville and Anne Müller (eds.), *Female vita religiosa between Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages: Structures, Developments and Spatial Contexts* (Berlin: Lit, 2011), pp. 173–85, at 173–5.

[61] Bede, *HE*, IV. 6–10, pp. 354–65.

community, following the liturgical prescriptions of the rule (as for example in singing the office of matins together just before daybreak),[62] and taking an active role in education as well as in private prayer and contemplation.

Bede also had contacts in the double monastery at Ely, whose members provided him with sufficient information about the history of their community that he could provide an account of the deeds and virtues of its first abbess, Æthelthryth. She, too, knew Bishop of Wilfrid well; he advised her during her second unconsummated marriage (to King Ecgfrith of Northumbria) and consecrated her to the religious life when she finally gained her husband's permission to leave the world and serve Christ in a monastery.[63] After a year at the Northumbrian monastery of Coldingham, she returned to her native East Anglia to establish a double house at Ely. Æthelthryth was renowned for her ascetic practices and particularly her prayerful devotion and strict observance of a monastic way of life that may have owed much to the influence of Wilfrid; for example, she supposedly remained in prayer each day from the end of the early morning office (*synaxis matutina*) until daybreak.[64] If Ely did follow the Roman rite, the abbess and her successors (her sister Seaxburh and the latter's daughter, Eormenhild) would all have been familiar with the liturgical recitation of Habakkuk's canticle at that office on Fridays. Coldingham seems less likely to have housed the recipient of Bede's commentary, however, given what Bede told us of the behaviour of the nuns (and monks) who lived there, and the abbey's ultimate fate (destruction by fire) for the slackness of its observance.[65] Those nuns displayed the opposite of the restraints that Bede urged on those consecrated to virginity, who should, he said in his commentary *On the Temple*, give evidence of behaviour consonant with that state, abstaining from all ills such as useless talk, immodest dress, carousing and drinking, and devoting themselves instead to 'holy vigils, prayer, divine readings and psalms'.[66]

Prayer underpinned the religious life in each of these communities of women, including Coldingham, at least in the early years after its foundation. Collectively and individually, these nuns articulated their devotion through intercession and contemplation, grounding their prayer in the reflective reading of holy scripture. Much of that intercessory endeavour they directed towards the preservation of the memory of their communities' first founders. Thus Whitby played a key role in the commemoration of the royal Northumbrian line from which its earliest abbesses came, and succeeding generations at Ely actively promoted the cult of Æthelthryth. Bede's narrative in the *Ecclesiastical History* placed most emphasis on the extraordinary feats of devotion that characterized those women later commemorated as saints, such as Hild and Æthelthryth, but the advice he gave in his commentary *On Habakkuk*

[62] Bede, *HE*, IV. 7, pp. 356–7.

[63] Bede, *HE*, IV. 19, pp. 392–3. Susan Rosser has argued that Bede's picture of St Æthelthryth owed much to Late Antique and particularly Merovingian models of female sanctity: 'Æthelthryth: a conventional saint?', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 79(3) (1997), pp. 15–24.

[64] Bede, *HE*, IV. 19, pp. 392–3. Christine Fell observed that Bede laid more stress on Æthelthryth's asceticism than on that of any other female saint: 'Saint Æðelþryð: A historical-hagiographical dichotomy revisited', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 38 (1994), pp. 18–34, at p. 22.

[65] Bede, *HE*, V. 14, pp. 503–7; Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 106.

[66] D. Hurst (ed.), Bede, *De templo*, 7: 3, CCSL 119A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), p. 163; Seán Connolly (transl.), *Bede: On the Temple* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), p. 26.

demonstrates how central individual spiritual endeavour was to the life of each professed member of these religious communities. Without patronizing his reader, or diminishing her efforts, Bede showed some sensitivity to the difficulties monastic women faced in trying to sustain a life in prayer and an awareness of the limitations imposed by human frailty. He persistently encouraged his dedicatee not to weaken in her resolve but to put her trust in God to overcome all the temptations that could beset her, 'whether from adversities or the allurements of the world'. As Bede asserted reassuringly: 'those who refer to his glory the whole credit for their success are deservedly helped by the Lord, so that having been proved by the temptations they have overcome, they may win the palm of their heavenly calling'.[67]

Boniface and the educated woman

Other early English female religious congregations beyond those with which we know Bede had direct contact stood out for their interest in education and learning, particularly those associated with the mission of Boniface to Germany.[68] The correspondence between some of those women and members of the Bonifacian circle in the continental mission-field sheds a fresh perspective on the centrality of prayer in the lives of women dedicated to God, and further reveals some of these women as more than passive observers of the work of evangelization, but as active participators in preaching the gospel.

Prominent among the women who travelled to Germany to assist Boniface in building up new Christian communities was the nun Leoba, who received her training in the monastic life at the West Saxon double house of Wimborne in Dorset.[69] Our information about Leoba comes from a *Vita* written *c*. 838 by Rudolf, a monk of the German abbey at Fulda (where Leoba was buried, near the tomb of St Boniface, following her death *c*. 782).[70] Born in Wessex to noble parents, Leoba, whose name means 'beloved', was given to the religious life at an early age by her mother, Æbbe, who consigned her only child to Abbess Tetta to be taught 'the sacred sciences'.[71] Leoba

[67] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 19, p. 408; transl. §38: 6–9, p. 94. Compare Bede's account of those who successfully overcome 'the promptings of the flesh and restrain the dissoluteness of wanton behaviour, so that they rise upwards in manner worthy of God by prayer, vigils and alms': *De Templo*, 22: 2, ed. Hurst, p. 225, transl. Connolly, p. 107.

[68] Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 76–7; Rosamond McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences*, Eighth Brixworth Lecture, Vaughan paper no. 36 ([Leicester]: Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester, 1991); reprinted in her *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), no. I; James T. Palmer *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 65–6, 72–3, 251–5.

[69] Cuthburg, the first abbess, was probably succeeded by her sister, Cwenburg; thereafter identifying Wimborne's abbesses with confidence is more difficult; see Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 275; B. Yorke, 'The Bonifacian mission and female religious in Wessex', *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), pp. 145–73, at pp. 159, 170–2.

[70] Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 204–11.

[71] G. Waitz (ed.), Rudolf of Fulda, *Vita Leobae abbatissae Biscofesheimensis*, ch. 6, M. G. H., Scriptores, xv, pt 1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1887), pp. 121–31, at p. 124; C. H. Talbot (transl.), *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1954), pp. 204–26, at p. 211.

supposedly shone at learning immediately, committing all she heard or read to memory and spurning all activity other than reading and hearing the word of God; she was said to have prayed continually knowing that 'the faithful are counselled to pray without ceasing'.[72] Indeed, Rudolf asserted, 'whenever she was not praying she worked with her hands at whatever was commanded her, . . . yet she spent more time in reading and listening to sacred scripture than she gave to manual labour'.[73] Popular with her sisters, she grew in learning and in holiness 'and her praise was on everyone's lips'.[74] Thus her fame spread to the continent and the English missionary Boniface wrote to Leoba's abbess, Tetta, asking her to release Leoba to join him in Germany, which – against the abbess's better judgement – duly happened.

Boniface made Leoba abbess of a convent at Bischofsheim, with a large congregation of nuns; there she trained the sisters in the monastic discipline she had learnt in England, and many of her pupils went on to become abbesses of other religious communities.[75] While in Germany, Leoba apparently continued to devote herself to learning, mastering not just all the books of the Old and the New Testaments but also many of the writings of patristic Fathers, decrees of church councils and canon law. Rudolf acclaimed her as an energetic teacher of her own nuns and asserted that she presented an example of holy living in order to appear blameless before God and to become a pattern of perfection to others, both within the walls of her convent and beyond. He narrated various tokens of Leoba's holiness witnessed by the wider populace, exhortations she made to groups of ordinary people, and occasions when her prayers (witnessed by many) caused disaster to be averted.[76] Thus, Rudolf demonstrated how Leoba never forgot the necessity for the concentration of mind on prayer.[77]

Rudolf's account of Leoba's life and deeds supposedly drew on oral testimony gathered by a priest and monk called Mago, who had interviewed four of Leoba's nuns and made notes towards a life but died before he could complete his work.[78] Yet, since Rudolf's primary purpose was didactic, his *Life* owed more to his own perceptions of how religious women should behave (and to the influence of male hagiographical models, especially that of St Martin of Tours) than to any genuine historical understanding; his account must be treated with considerable suspicion, especially in the passages which purport to describe the customs and practices of Wimborne.[79] As the founder of female monasticism in Germany, Leoba needed to be portrayed by Rudolf as an exemplary figure, above reproach, with a pedigree suitable to lay the foundations of female religious observance in a newly Christianized region.[80] To achieve that end, Rudolf retold Leoba's memories of her time at Wimborne as recounted to her sisters according to ninth-century Carolingian ideals

[72] 1 Thess. 5. 17; 2 Thess. 3. 10.
[73] Rudolf, *Vita Leobae*, ch. 6, ed. Waitz, p. 125, transl. Talbot, p. 211.
[74] Ibid., ch. 10, pp. 125–6; transl. p. 214.
[75] Ibid., ch. 11, p. 126; transl. p. 214.
[76] Ibid., chs 12–14, pp. 127–8; transl. pp. 217–20.
[77] Ibid., ch. 18, p. 126; transl. pp. 214–15; see Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 208–11.
[78] Ibid., preface, p. 122; transl. pp. 205–6.
[79] Julia M. H. Smith, 'The problem of female sanctity in Carolingian Europe, c. 780-920', *Past and Present* 146 (1995), pp. 3–37, at pp. 16–17; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 205–6.
[80] Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 274.

of strict monastic enclosure.[81] He went out of his way to portray the double house at Wimborne as strictly segregated, suggesting that the monks and nuns never came into contact with one another, nor did laymen (or even bishops) ever venture inside the women's part of the house; only priests were permitted entry to say mass, and even they had to leave immediately after the service.[82] Further, he needed to emphasize the extent of Leoba's learning and piety in order to explain how she came to Boniface's attention and found herself transplanted from the obscurity of rural Dorset to acquire such prominence on the continent that she visited the court of the Carolingian king, Charles (the Great), and was buried – at the saint's request – next to Boniface, sharing his tomb at Fulda.[83] The letter that Boniface wrote to Leoba's abbess, Tetta, asking her to let Leoba join him no longer survives, but the collection of his letters made by his disciple Lull after his death does include a letter from Leoba herself which goes some way to corroborate some of Rudolf's claims about the young nun's interest in learning, and also serves to explain how the missionary knew of her zeal and contemplative devotion.

Leoba wrote to Boniface probably soon after 732, asking for the elder man's prayers and his support. She reminded him that the two were related, through Leoba's mother (Æbbe), who was still alive, and that he had once been a close friend of her father, Dynne, for whose soul she requested Boniface's prayers. Primarily she tried to persuade the holy man to assume the role of surrogate brother for her, now that she lacked any living male kin; as well as asking that the bond of their true affection might be knit ever more closely for all time, she begged Boniface to protect her 'by the shield of his prayers from the darts of the hidden enemy'. With her letter she sent him a small gift, and she ended her missive with some rather clumsy verses in which she evoked the Trinity: father, son and perpetual fire.[84] The reply that she entreated Boniface to send does not survive, but Boniface did correspond with the abbess Eadburg, whom Leoba described as her teacher in the poetic art at the end of her letter and who may have been a pupil of Boniface's before he left England for Germany.[85] Leoba's reference to her teacher may have done as much to commend her to the missionary as a useful co-worker in the nascent German church as did her reminder of their shared kinship.

Boniface expressed his affection, but also his admiration for Eadburg, particularly for her learning, in the letters that he wrote to her at different times in his career. The earliest can be dated to between 716 and 719, before the Englishman Winfrith had taken

[81] Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 235; L. M. C. Weston, 'Sanctimoniales cum sanctimoniale: Particular friendships and female community in Anglo-Saxon England', in C. B. Pasternack and L. M. C. Weston (eds.), *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillmore Calder* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), pp. 35–62, at pp. 52–4; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 205–7.

[82] Rudolf, *Vita Leobae*, ch. 2, ed. Waitz, p. 123, transl. Talbot, p. 207; Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 275.

[83] Rudolf, *Vita Leobae*, chs 17–18, p. 129, transl. pp. 222–3.

[84] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 29, pp. 52–3; E. Emerton (transl.), *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 59–60; Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 277; Yorke, 'Female religious', pp. 149–50.

[85] Yorke, 'Female religious', pp. 150–1 and 170–2. It seems unlikely (contra Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 275–6, n. 24) that Leoba's teacher Eadburg and her abbess at Wimborne, Tetta, were the same person. Whether Eadburg became abbess at Wimborne after Tetta, or left that abbey to assume control of another house cannot be determined.

the name of Boniface in religion; there he addressed *domina* Eadburg with affection, congratulating her on her long perseverance in the monastic life, and recounting for her, at her request, the vision seen by a monk of the monastery at Wenlock.[86] In about 735, he sent Eadburg another letter to thank her for some books and vestments she had sent to him, 'an exile in Germany, who has to enlighten the dark corners of the Germanic peoples' and could easily fall into evil without 'the Word of God as a lamp to his feet and a light upon his path'.[87] On another occasion he wrote to ask her to have a copy of the epistles of Peter made in gold letters 'to impress honour and reverence for the Sacred Scriptures visibly upon the carnally minded to whom I preach'.[88] Some years later, he shared with Eadburg the difficulties he faced in advancing the cause of evangelism: 'on every hand is struggle and grief, fighting without and fear within'; then he asked Eadburg for her prayers to 'enlighten the hearts of the Gentiles to the vision of the Gospel of the glory of Christ'.[89] Boniface's disciple Lull also corresponded with Eadburg, sending her some spices and a silver stylus with one letter and begging her to write back to him.[90] All these letters reveal a learned woman, able to write as well as to read Latin (for it was she who had taught Leoba to write verses closely modelled on those of Aldhelm of Malmesbury);[91] among the members of the monastery of which she was abbess were clearly scribes capable of copying manuscripts. Even though Boniface did send, via a priest travelling back to England, some of the materials necessary for copying the Petrine epistles, the effusiveness of his earlier thanks for the gift of books suggests that he recognized their worth as well as the effort expended in creating them.[92]

Yet, the value that Boniface and Lull placed on the friendship of Eadburg lay less in her intellectual capacity, or in her ability to provide practically for their needs while living and working abroad: what lay at the heart of this correspondence, and thus seemingly at the core of the relationship between the devout woman and these two clerics, was prayer. As well as thanking Eadburg for sending him the books he needed, Boniface begged her earnestly to pray for him, because his sins caused him to be tossed by the tempests of perilous sea: 'Pray to Him who dwells on high but looks after the lowly, that he may forgive my faults and lend me his word in the opening of

[86] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no.10, pp. 7–15; transl. Emerton, pp. 25–31.

[87] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 30, p. 54; transl. Emerton, pp. 60–1.

[88] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 35, p. 60; transl. Emerton, pp. 64–5; on the wider question of whether books were exchanged as gifts between the Bonifacian circle and ecclesiastics back home see John-Henry Wilson Clay, 'Gift-giving and books in the letter of St Boniface and Lul', *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009), pp. 313–25.

[89] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 65; transl. Emerton, pp. 121–2. Tangl identified the recipient of this letter as abbess of Minster in Thanet, but Yorke has argued convincingly that she was the same Eadburg who taught Leoba and probably abbess of a West Saxon nunnery: 'Female religious', pp. 151–2.

[90] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 70, p. 143, E. Kylie (transl.), *The English Correspondence of Saint Boniface* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1911), p. 108.

[91] Christine Fell, 'Some implications of the Boniface correspondence', in Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (eds.), *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 29–43, at p. 38; Yorke, 'The Bonifacian mission', pp. 150–1.

[92] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 35, p. 60, transl. Emerton, p. 65. For discussion of the practical benefits provided by nuns to Boniface's mission see Patrick Hyland, 'Missionary nuns and the monastic vocation in Anglo-Saxon England', *American Benedictine Review* 47 (1996), pp. 141–74, at pp. 58–60.

my mouth, so that the gospel of the glory of Christ may run its course and be made manifest among the nations.'[93] While not minimizing his own weaknesses, Boniface displayed confidence in the efficacy of Eadburg's earnest prayer that she would succeed in petitioning the Lamb of God to keep him safe from harm as he went among the dens of wolves, and so give him the light to enlighten the hearts of the Gentiles to the vision of the gospel.[94] Lull also asked Eadburg to remember him in the holy protection of her prayers, that the unfailing assistance of her intercession would both support him in his weakness and defend him from the snares of the devil.[95] Other religious women (and men) in England also sent letters to workers in the German mission-field, and all included requests for the prayers of the holy fathers for themselves; for nuns particularly, intercession from within the walls of their own convents gave them a means of direct engagement with overseas mission.[96] Where the correspondence with Eadburg stands out is in the evidence it offers for the value that the two missionaries placed on the spiritual support that their friendship with this abbess provided them. Underpinning these letters is a confidence in the nun's prayerful devotion and a belief that her intercession (supported by her Latin learning, and thus her reading and reflection on scripture) could prove directly beneficial to each of them, in this life as well as in the next.[97] Eadburg did not have the opportunity offered to Leoba to exercise her spiritual gifts in the uncertain environment of the partially Christianized German lands, but her contribution to the success of those missionary efforts arguably equalled that of her sisters who had risked everything to participate in 'reaping the harvest of holy souls into the storehouse of the heavenly kingdom'.[98]

Women, prayer and preaching in the early English Church

Writing about Bede and the educated woman, Sr Benedicta read Bede's *On Habakkuk* as fitting closely with her view of Bede's usual approach to women; she commented on the way in which that text reflected Bede's personal approval of the enabling role of women as life-givers. Just as lay women broke bread for their households and, as mothers, gave life to children, so women consecrated to religion 'were the ones who broke the bread of the Scriptures and gave life to souls'.[99] Ward's favourable assessment of Bede's attitudes towards female religious contrasts with that of other commentators such as Stephanie Hollis, who has argued that Bede deliberately underplayed the participatory role performed in the work and ministry of the early English Church by female abbesses such as Hild and Ælfflæd of Whitby.[100] Similarly, Lees and Overing

[93] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 30, p. 54; transl. Emerton, pp. 60–1; Hyland, 'Missionary nuns', p. 161.
[94] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 65; transl. Emerton, pp. 121–2; compare Tangl no. 30 already quoted.
[95] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. 70, p. 143, transl. Kylie, p. 108.
[96] Hyland, 'Missionary nuns', p. 159; McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, pp. 17–18, 21–3.
[97] Compare two letters of Lull's to other, unknown nuns, in which he also praised his recipients for their learning and begged for their prayers: Tangl, *Die Briefe*, nos 98 and 140; see Fell, 'Some implications', pp. 33–5.
[98] Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no 15, pp. 26–8; transl. Emerton, p. 40.
[99] Ward, '"To my dearest sister"', p. 108.
[100] Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women,* pp. 125–7, 179–207.

have suggested that Bede struggled with the idea of politically (or ecclesiastically) prominent women, arguing that women became increasingly invisible as the written word acquired more power in Anglo-Saxon society.[101] The more positive assessment of the contribution that religious women made to the evolution of the church in Anglo-Saxon society that Sr Benedicta offered can be supported by reference to other texts written by Bede. As has already been mentioned, Bede clearly recognized women as preachers.

Bede commended the merits of female singers in his commentary *On Ezra and Nehemiah*, observing that in the female sex 'there are many people found who not only by the way they live but also by their preaching (*quae non solum uiuendo uerum etiam praedicando*) enkindle the hearts of their neighbours to the praise of their creator and, as though with the sweetness of a holy voice, assist the labour of those who build the Lord's temple'.[102] In an influential article on Bede's ideas about reform, Alan Thacker drew attention to this passage when discussing the importance that Bede attached to the role of teachers and preachers, the spiritual guides of early English Christians, who followed in the footsteps of the apostles. As Thacker demonstrated, Bede chose in one of his Christmas sermons to differentiate this group of religious leaders from the ordained hierarchy of deacons, priests and bishops; his *doctores* and *praedicatores* came from the wider ecclesial community, including significant monastic leaders, but even the devout heads of secular households.[103]

> Spiritual pastors in the church are appointed especially for this, that they may proclaim the mysteries of the Word of God, and that they may show to their listeners that the marvels which they have learned in the scriptures are to be marvelled at. It is not only bishops, presbyters, deacons and even those who govern monasteries, who are to be understood to be pastors, but also all the faithful, who keep watch over the little ones of their house, are properly called "pastors" insofar as they preside with solicitous watchfulness over their own house.

Elsewhere, in his commentary *On the Temple*, Bede argued that the word *sacerdos* (which 'name comes in Latin from the fact that the priest should offer sacred guidance to those lower than himself') could mystically be understood to encompass a larger group than the ministers of the altar, including 'all who are outstanding by reason of the loftiness of their good life and salutary teaching and are of benefit not only to themselves but to a great many others as well'.[104] Bede had no doubt that those who served as teachers and leaders needed themselves to be pure, chastening their own bodies and bringing them into subjection,[105] but he clearly distinguished between those ordained to the orders of priest and bishop and

[101] Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), especially pp. 15–39.
[102] Bede, *In Ezram*, I [2: 65], ed. Hurst, p. 257; transl. DeGregorio, p. 32.
[103] Bede, *Homelia*, I. 7, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 122 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), p. 49; Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst (transl.), *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels, I* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), pp. 68–9.
[104] Bede, *De templo*, 17: 4, p. 194, transl. p. 68.
[105] Bede, *In Ezram* III [12: 30], pp. 379–80, transl. pp. 379–80.

those whose authority came from their institution into positions requiring spiritual leadership.[106] Those instituted to roles that gave them the guardianship of souls and required them to lead and nurture their communities, not just by example but by exhortation and instruction, could be women as well as men. In this context, Hild and her successors as abbesses at Whitby, and the female leaders of other religious households such as Barking, Ely and Wimborne, stand more clearly not just as pious and virtuous inspirations to their flocks, but as their teachers and spiritual leaders: Ælfflæd was indeed *magistra* and *doctrix*, and Aldhelm's *flores ecclesiasticae* were true scholars.[107] Boniface's attempts to bring educated women to assist in the labours of evangelization in Germany fit well against this background of women active in word as well as in prayer.

Re-reading the commentary *On the Canticle of Habakkuk* that Bede dedicated to an anonymous nun, 'his dearest sister', with this more inclusive image of Bede's conception of the role of teachers and preachers in the early English Church in mind, we find our understanding of the educational and hortatory responsibilities of women enhanced. Bede's correspondent did not need his admonitions to adhere closely to the Church's teachings in preserving her purity, eschewing worldly things and focusing on things above by living a spiritual life; she already possessed those virtues and could take comfort from his assertion: 'while these lived spiritual lives, the very extensive fields of the divine scriptures were producing spiritual food for them'.[108] Thus she need not fear Bede's warning that 'the fields do not produce food when this people, on opening the pages of the divine scriptures, is unable, for lack of proper understanding to find the pastures of truth'.[109] Her ministry rested on the foundations of her prayer-life; she did not lack the 'refreshment of inner sweetness, the source from which the innocence of a simple life can come'.[110] Refreshed, informed and nourished with the spiritual food of the word of God, as the head of her household, this devout virgin was equipped to feed the sheep of the field, both the sisters within cloistered walls and, arguably, their lay neighbours. Just as the Lord himself sent his disciples to preach in every town and place he was to come to (Lk. 10. 1), 'this we observe happening to this day in the same order, for the Lord follows his preachers, because it is first necessary that the word of the teacher be heard, and that the light of truth be thus firmly fixed in the heart of the hearer'.[111] Like Hild, Ælfflæd, Eadburg and Leoba, Bede's dedicatee possessed the inner capacity to act as a teacher and impart the light of truth to others. With her more celebrated sisters, she owed that capability not merely to her learning and her meditation and reflection on the word of God revealed through scripture, but fundamentally to her capacity to root that contemplation deep in the prayers that were constantly on her lips and in her heart.

[106] Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform', p. 131.
[107] Bede, *HE*, III. 24, pp. 292–3; IV. 26, pp. 428–9; Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, p. 323, transl. p. 132.
[108] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 17–18, p. 406, transl. §37: 13, p. 91.
[109] Ibid., transl. §37: 25, p. 92.
[110] Ibid., transl. §37: 26, p. 92.
[111] Bede, *In Hab.*, 3: 5, p. 389; transl. §12: 8, p. 74.

6

Praying the Psalter in Carolingian Times: What Was Supposed to Be Going on in the Minds of Monks?*

Henry Mayr-Harting

Much of a monk's or nun's day in the ninth century, as in our own times, was occupied with the recitation of the Psalter. There is a degree of difficulty about making this an activity meaningful to the mind, a difficulty which may be recognized by present-day monks and nuns, but is rarely recognized by historians of religion. When we say the Lord's Prayer or the Ave Maria, every phrase is endowed with a ready-made meaning for us – however distracted we may be in practice. The psalms, however, consist of rapidly changing images, some of which are extremely eloquent and beautiful, but many of which are either meaningless to ordinary educated people or are even likely to distract them in the wrong way. This is the problem which my present paper is about – apropos of Hrabanus's time, but perhaps also with relevance to any time.

Although he was a Benedictine abbot, Hrabanus wrote no direct commentary on the Psalms.[1] That was not because he failed to take his pastoral responsibilities to his monks at Fulda seriously. He took them very seriously. Perhaps it was partly because, amidst all the previous commentaries of the Psalms, there were two which were great pieces of work, those of Cassiodorus and especially of Augustine of Hippo. Had Hrabanus

* This paper, with a number of changes and considerable enlargement of the notes, is the original English version of what was translated into German by Archabbot Jeremias Schröder, to be delivered as a lecture under his auspices as Archabbot at the monastery of St Ottilien, near Munich, in 2006. In that year a series of lectures was arranged in commemoration of the 1150th anniversary of the death, in 856, or Hrabanus Maurus, Abbot of Fulda (822–42) and subsequently Archbishop of Mainz, and patron saint of the Archabbey's Gymnasium. I was grateful to Jeremias Schröder, a friend also of Benedicta Ward, for his excellent translation into German, as I always am for his friendship and intellectual stimulus. The German version appeared as, 'Was geht im Mönch beim Beten vor? Psalterillustrationen der Hrabanus Zeit?', in *Hrabanus Maurus: Profil eines Europäischen Gelehrten*, ed. Norbert Kössinger (EOS Verlag, St. Ottilien, 2008), pp. 67–91. I thank warmly the publisher and its director Pater Cyrill Schäfer, OSB, for his permission and indeed his encouragement to publish this English version. I regret that it has not been feasible to reproduce the fine illustrations of this book in colour, but only in black and white.

[1] The short chapter, *De Psalmis* in his work *De Institutione Clericorum* is concerned mainly with the question of how the Psalms should be sung. Hrabanus's principal source here was the *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis* of Isidore of Seville, *Hrabanus Maurus, De Institutione Clericorum*, ed. Detlev Zimpel (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), pp.408ff.

written his own psalm commentary it would no doubt have drawn extensively on Augustine's work, and without due acknowledgement, for he was one of the greatest plagiarists in the history of Christian writing. Hrabanus, however, was a practical man, writing for people of a much lower standard of education than was Augustine or even Cassiodorus, and one may doubt whether even a plagiarized version of Augustine on the Psalms would have helped much with our problem of how to cater to the *minds* of monks when they recited the Psalter. For Augustine's book, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, is of enormous length, and almost every verse of every psalm is invested with allegorical interpretation, noble, it is true, but also elaborate. It was hugely influential in creating *a* Christian understanding of the Psalms, but its effect was that of a gradual percolator to the most highly educated rather than of a *Vade Mecum* for the average brethren or for the laity who might want to recite the Psalter, particularly kings, queens and aristocrats.[2]

Two illustrated Psalters, both of *circa* 830, and thus of the period when Hrabanus was Abbot of Fulda (822–42), are the best helps I know to understanding what should, or could, go on in the minds of those who prayed the Psalter. One is the Utrecht Psalter;[3] the other is the Stuttgart Psalter.[4] These names both derive from the libraries where the books are today. But the Utrecht Psalter was made at Rheims under the patronage of Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims, and the Stuttgart Psalter was probably made at the wealthy abbey of St Germain des Prés, just outside Paris.

It may seem surprising that I invoke pictorial art to illuminate how it was thought that the mind should or could work during prayer. But Charlemagne himself, and people in the generation after him, the generation of Hrabanus Maurus, were very interested in the role of art as a help to prayer, just as they were interested altogether in what went on inside the mind in religious matters, such as being baptized or taking oaths.[5] Figural images in art, if they led to superstitious veneration of the images themselves,

[2] For the text of Augustine's work *Aurelii Augustini Opera, Enarrationes in Psalmos*, eds. Eligius Dekkers and Johannes Fraipont, *Corpus Christianorum* 38, 39, 40 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956). For manuscripts of the work in the Carolingian period, André Wilmart, 'La Tradition des Grands Ouvrages de de St. Augustin', in *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 2, Rome 1931, pp. 291–315 esp. 311–312. For insights into Carolingian use of the work, Janet Nelson 'The intellectual in Politics, the Capitulary of Coulaines 843', (1992), reprinted in her *The Frankish World* (London: Hambledon, 1996), esp. pp. 162–68; and Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 249–51. For Charlemagne's time, c.800, Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Augustine of Hippo, Chelles, and the Carolingian Renaissance', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 45 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 51–75.

[3] *Der Utrecht Psalter*, *Facsimile und Kommentar*, ed. Koert van der Korst and J. Engelbregt (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1984).

[4] Bernhard Bischoff, Florentine Mütherich, et al., *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter: Facsimile und Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart: E. Schreiber Graphische Kunstanstalten, 1965).

[5] As to prayer in general during the Carolingian period, Mayke de Jong, one of the greatest of Carolingianist scholars, has made illuminating contributions to this subject in her writings, e.g. 'Carolingian monasticism: the power of prayer', in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History* 2nd edn (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 622–53; 'Charlemagne's church', in J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne, Empire and Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 103–35; *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–40* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 2009). More particularly for the present context, see, Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne's Religion', in Peter Godman, Jörg Janut, Peter Johanek (eds.), *Am Vorabend der Kaiser Krönung. Der Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), esp. pp. 119–21.

were abhorrent. They were allowable if they were intended not for adoration, but *ad memoriam rerum gestarum*, namely to recall events to the memory, events like those in the life of Christ.[6] How the memory worked played an important role in prayer, as it has done so with countless other spiritual writers, most notably Ignatius of Loyola. The memory could be helped in prayer by art. Charlemagne's favourite son-in-law, Angilbert, whom he made Abbot of St Ricquier in the 790s, had stucco reliefs made for various places in his church, depicting the Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord, and during the processions which began or ended the offices, the choir of monks were to pray before one or other of these reliefs, presumably in silent prayer.[7] Charlemagne devoted a chapter of his famous Synod of Frankfurt (794) to the language of prayer. 'Let nobody believe that God can only be prayed to in the three languages (namely, Hebrew, Greek and Latin), because God can be adored, and man can be listened to, in every language, if he asks just things (*si iusta petierit*).'[8] This last little phrase, *si iusta petierit*, represents ethic, inner meaning and right intention, in the whole concept of prayer held by Charlemagne and his advisers.

It may seem that I am in danger of representing Charlemagne and Carolingian people too much as if they were Protestants before their time, primeval Protestants, with some deep sense of obligation to their inner spiritual selves, as though they had thrown off medieval magic and externality almost before the Middle Ages began. Was there not, one might ask, a strong aspect of magic, even superstition in Charlemagne's own religion, with all that stress on *correct* formulae, on *correct* chant, on much almsgiving and many litanies as if they would automatically stave off God's anger and win for the ruler success in battle?[9] I think that Charlemagne *was* the first great Protestant! But when we look at Psalters of the time of Hrabanus, we cannot say that any trace of magic is totally lacking. So, before turning to the Utrecht and Stuttgart Psalters, I turn briefly to the beautiful so-called Folchard Psalter made at St Gall in the mid-ninth century.

First, its illumination for the beginning of Psalm 51/52 begins with the words, QUID GLORIARIS IN MALITIA QUI POTENS ES? Why boastest thou, thou tyrant, that thou canst do mischief? The initial Q is a fine specimen of St Gall Carolingian art (Ill. 1), with its golden contours filled in with interlace or tendril ornament, all on a purple ground, and with a late antique type of border of joined-up fleur-de-lis pattern, again in gold, on a blue-green background.[10]

I'd make a simple point about the art of this page, with its lack of any figures. It highlights the *sacredness* of the words themselves. There are only a very few words on the page, and all the art is lavished on the very first word, indeed the very first letter,

[6] *Libri Carolini*, MGH Concilia II, Suppl. I, ed. Ann Freeman (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1998). Of many examples, I refer here to just one, iii, 16, p.411, lines 3ff.

[7] See Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne as a Patron of Art', *Studies in Church History* 28 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), ed. Diana Wood, p. 65.

[8] Synod of Frankfurt, c.52, MGH *Capitularia Regum Francorum,* I, I, p. 78.

[9] As, for instance, in Charlemagne's Letter to Fastrada, 794, MGH, Epp. IV, Karolini Aevi ii, ed E. Dümmler (Berlin, 1895) pp. 528–29.

[10] Colour illustration in my paper as in asterisked note above, or in *The Culture of the Abbey of St. Gall*, ed. Werner Vogler, trans. James C. King (Stuttgart and Zurich: Belser, 1991), p. 89. A facsimile of the Folchard Psalter in digital form can be found under http://www.ccsg.unifr.ch/virt_bib/handschriften.htm (15.12.2007).

1. Folchard-Psalter: Initial 'Q' at the start of Psalm 51. © Stiftsbibliothek, St Gallen.

of the psalm. This, then, is not a book conceived only as a didactic instrument, always with a satisfying page of text to read. It reminds me rather of a famous article by Hans Jantzen, entitled 'Das Wort als Bild'.[11] It emphasizes that the words themselves were sacred, and thus there was a religious obligation to pronounce them correctly; this was a constant theme in Carolingian regulations.[12] I have known monks of our own day, who used to say in the time when all the offices were still recited in Latin as they were of course in Hrabanus's time, that the first and fundamental obligation of a monk was to get his tongue round the correct reciting of the Latin words of the Psalter.

Contrast this with the same psalm in the Stuttgart Psalter of a little earlier (fo.64v) (Ill. 2). The Q has hardly any ornament besides the fish (so beloved of French initial letter ornament, still earlier, in the eighth century). Below is a figural scene illustrating the tyrant being reproached by a man, which has sometimes been interpreted as David reproached by Nathan. No art historian has ever offered an explanation of what is going on on the right! Anyhow one can see that the Stuttgart Psalter is all morality (or immorality), whereas the Folchard Psalter of St Gall is all sacrality. Some might discern a concept of magic behind the Folchard Psalter, an idea that correct words would automatically compel supernatural power to stay its anger and bestow its favour. But I do not see it quite like that. I see it that embellished words are words which should be embellished with meaning; and that words correctly pronounced produce a right frame of mind within which to seek out that meaning. The Rule of St Benedict, chapter 19, says, 'let us consider how we ought to sing the psalms so that mind and voice may be in harmony'.[13] The focus on the sacred word, symbolized by the initial ornament of the Folchard Psalter, suggests one way in which the harmony between mind and voice could be achieved.

Now we come to the Utrecht Psalter, made at Rheims c. 830. It is very possible that this wonderful book was commissioned by Archbishop Ebo as a present for his friend the Empress Judith, wife of the Emperor Louis the Pious. Even if it were not made for monks, however, the whole idea of illustration in any Psalter at that time was bound to be derived from what rulers or aristocrats shared with the culture of monasteries.

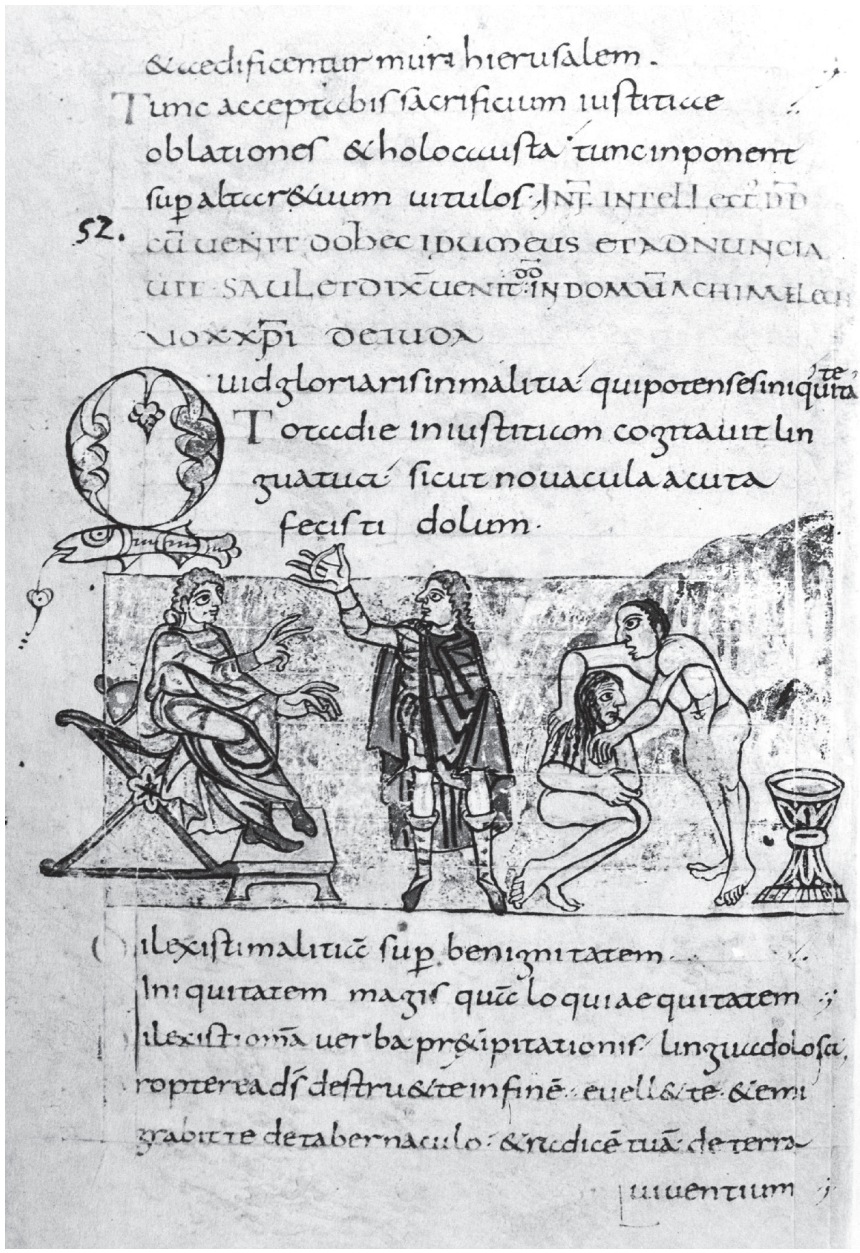
Before each psalm text in the Utrecht Psalter there is a drawing, a wash drawing, and these drawings are some of the most brilliant achievements in the whole of western art. The overwhelming majority of them are entirely literal illustrations of psalm verses. There is no theological or symbolical interpretation; only images which are entirely understandable from what the psalm says. Here is the example of Psalm 20/21 (fo.11^{v}) (Ill. 3):

> VV. 1–3, 7–9, 11–13
>
> v.1 The king shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord; exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.
>
> v.2 Thou has given him his heart's desire; and has not denied him the request of his lips.

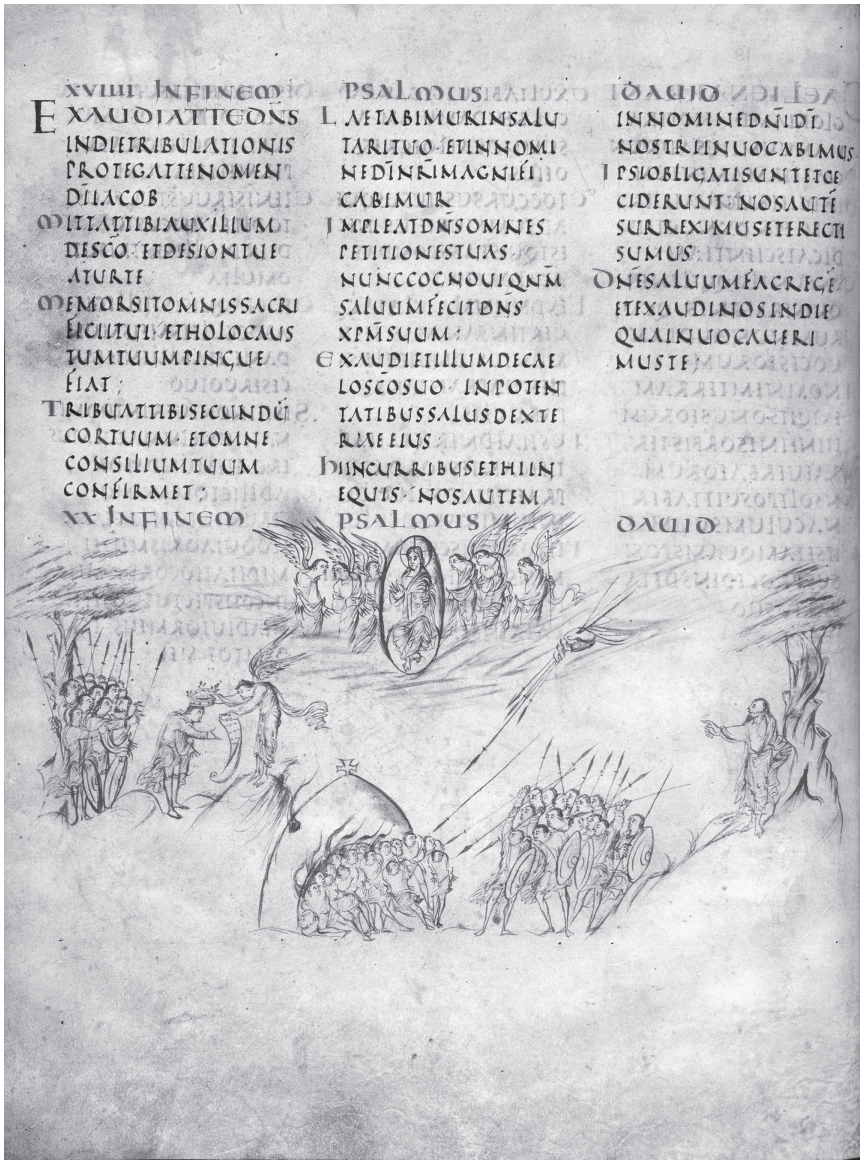
[11] Hans Jantzen, 'Das Wort als Bild in der Frühmittelalterlichen Buchmalerei', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 60 (1940), pp. 507–13.

[12] Most obviously in Charlemagne's *De Litteris Colendis*, MGH Capitularia I, no. 29, p. 79; cf. Thomas Martin, in Archiv für Diplomatik 31 (1985), pp. 231–35.

[13] I have used the translation with Latin text of Justin McCann (London: The Newman Press, 1952), pp. 68–9.



2. Stuttgart Psalter: Beginning of Psalm 51. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.



3. Utrecht Psalter: Beginning of Psalm 20 (21). © Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 32.

> v.3 For thou shalt prevent him with the blessings of goodness; and shalt set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
>
> v.7 The king putteth his trust in the Lord; and in the mercy of the most highest he shall not miscarry.
>
> v.8 All thine enemies shall feel thy hand; thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee.
>
> v.9 Thou shalt make them like a fiery oven in time of thy wrath; the Lord shall destroy them in his displeasure, and the fire shall consume them.
>
> v.11 For they intended mischief against thee; and imagined such a device as they are not able to perform.
>
> v.12 Therefore shalt thou put them to flight; and the strings of thy bow shalt thou make against the face of them.
>
> v.13 Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength; so will we sing and praise thy power.

This picture is composed of very disparate elements, yet it gives an undoubted impression of visual unity. But that unity is not at all one of meaning; it is purely compositional.

It may seem rather surprising at first sight that a psalter into which much artistic creativity has been put should mostly adopt so literal an approach. After all, Augustine in his exposition on the psalms, the most read work on the psalms in the Carolingian period, is full of allegorization, such as that the evils which encompass us are our own sins and those of others or are veiled prophecies of the life and passion of Christ. But reciters of the psalms have their own emotions, not always easily controllable. Monks, let alone seculars, come from social backgrounds of their own; they had brothers, parents and cousins or nephews and nieces, who faced the full turbulences of the world; they themselves and their monasteries were often caught up in the violent politics of their time. At the turn of political events in 842 Hrabanus himself was forced to give up the abbacy of Fulda. The psalms express many benevolent emotions – thanksgiving, praise, wonder at the glories of creation. But they often express darker emotions too – fear, anger, bewilderment, feelings of abandonment, desire for revenge. In Herman Gunkel's masterly book on the Psalms, first published in 1933 (note the date), by far the longest chapter is devoted to what in English are called 'Songs of Complaint'.[14] These have the function of saying to God in effect: 'look, Lord, these emotions are too strong for me to control, so I lay them before you as they are and as I am'. Is that not a reasonable sort of prayer?[15] The drawings could help the person praying to articulate his or her emotions.

One has to remember that the period around 830 when the Utrecht Psalter was produced at Rheims was one of great political upheaval, involving a large proportion of the aristocracy. There were revolts against Louis the Pious in 830 and in 833. Ebbo

[14] Herman Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon; Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998), chapter 6; also chapter 4.

[15] I have been influenced in the approach of this paragraph by a fine lecture on the Psalms by Oliver O'Donovan, which I heard in the summer of 1998.

of Rheims remained loyal in 830; he revolted in 833. He was under heavy pressure in those early years of the 830s. People complained that the wars between the brothers, sons of Louis the Pious, wars which he seemed unable to control and which the Empress Judith's machinations seemed to aggravate, constantly put pressure on the loyalties of their vassals. They also complained that the brothers were constantly suborning the loyalties of each other's vassals.[16] So there was a world of anxiety, anger and ever-shifting loyalties by whole groups of warriors. Everyone was caught up in it. No wonder the Utrecht Psalter sometimes depicts feverish scenes with whole armies engaged in battles, armies which always seem to be grouping and regrouping in its illustrations. Consider the illustration Psalm 26/27 (fo.15r) (Ill. 4), a psalm which begins with the innocuous words *Dominus illuminatio mea*, 'The Lord is my light', incidentally the motto of Oxford University, but is soon hard into the language of battles and warfare.

A great English art historian, Francis Wormald, writing for the Utrecht Institute of Art History in 1953, described the Utrecht Psalter and its illustrations, as representing:[17]

4. Utrecht Psalter: Psalm 26 (27), with battle scenes observed by the Psalmist (top right) from a hill. © Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 32.

[16] For all this, the primary source is Nithard's *Histories*, see Nithard, *Histoire des Fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. P. R. Lauer (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1964) (English translation in B. W. Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), pp. 129–74. For Nithard's rather personal take on it, see Janet L. Nelson, 'Public Histories and Private History in the work of Nithard' (1985), in her *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986). Further, Eric J. Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt, Dynastic Politics and Aristocratic Factionalism in the Early Middle Ages: the Saxon *Stellinga* Reconsidered', *Speculum* 70 (1995), pp. 467–501; Stuart Airlie, 'Bonds of power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious', in Peter Godman and Roger Collins (eds.), *Charlemagne's Heir* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 191–204; Elizabeth Ward, 'Caesar's Wife: the Career of the Empress Judith, 819–829', Ibid., pp. 205–27, esp. 211.16.)

[17] Francis Wormald, *The Utrecht Psalter* (1953), in his *Collected Writings* i (London/Oxford: Harvey Miller, 1984), pp. 38–9.

> a world of ecstasy, tearing wind, and unceasing violence. . . . Frequently there are figures of Christ and angels in the sky, while the Psalmist is poised on the top of a hill around which surge battles and other scenes of violence

A particularly interesting battle scene in the Utrecht Psalter illustrates Psalm 23/24 vv. 7 to 10 (fo. 13^{v}) (Ill. 5):

> Attolite portas principes vestras et elevamini portae aeternales; et introibit rex gloriae.
> Lift up your heads O ye gates and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
> Who is the King of Glory; it is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.
> Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
> Who is the King of glory; even the Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.

Christ is not in the sky here, because he is the King of Glory about to enter the city gates, about to enter at the head of an army, the Lord mighty in battle, – an army composed of the 11 apostles.

An Old High German poem, the *Heliand*, which adapted the Life of Christ to a Germanic aristocratic audience, also saw Christ metaphorically as a military leader of his Apostles. This poem was composed in Hrabanus's time as Abbot of Fulda, and it is even possible that it was composed at Fulda itself.[18]

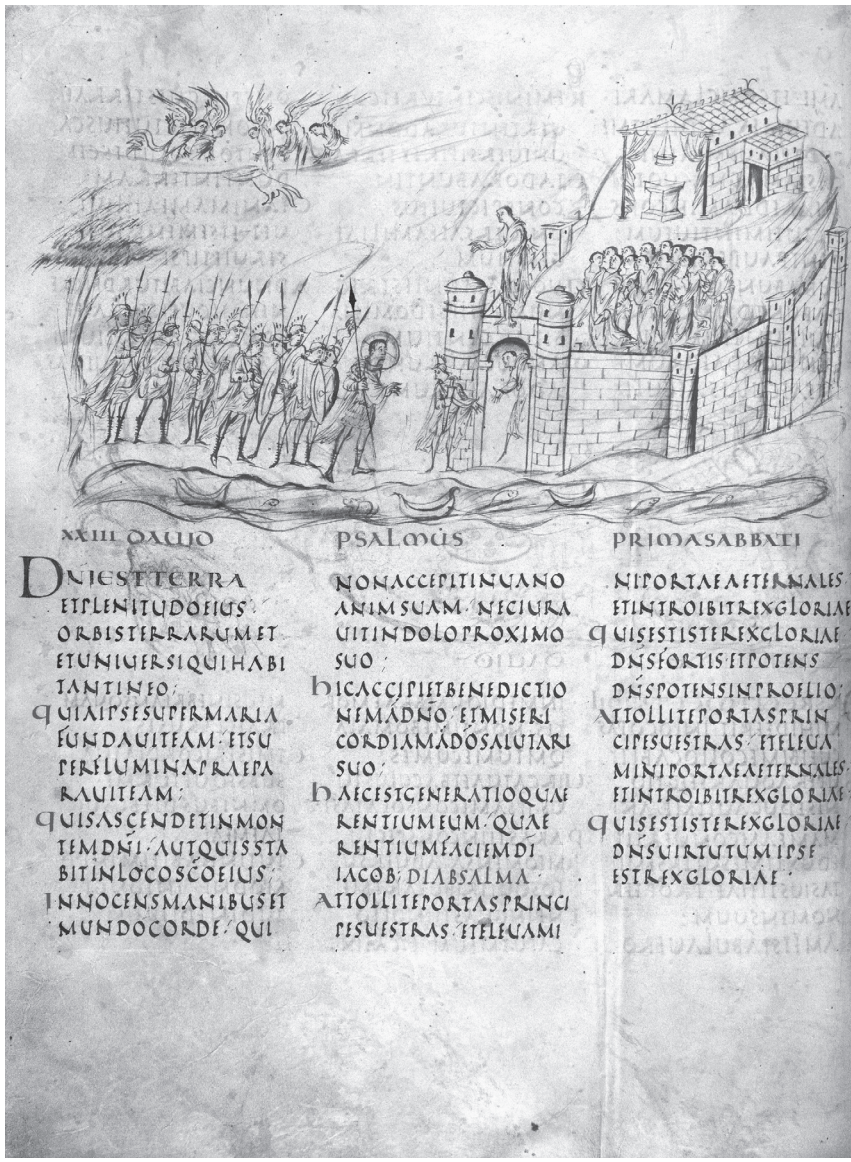
Again one has to remember that monks and nuns were the brothers, sisters and cousins of the secular warrior aristocracy. Psalmody was their way of fighting for *their* Lord.

Before I leave the Utrecht Psalter, the reader may have been wondering from where this highly original-looking and unusual style of drawing came from into the ninth-century School of Rheims. There seems little doubt that behind this Psalter there was a late antique, fifth-century model or prototype with drawings/illustrations for every psalm. That still leaves open how much original artistic input there was by the ninth-century Rheims artists in this book. All the indications are that they were well capable of handling the vibrant late antique style freely and creatively. Therefore, based on late antique foundations as it was, one should not underestimate the degree to which this book was also an original Carolingian achievement.[19]

The Stuttgart Psalter, made probably at the monastery of St Germain des Prés, also about 830, is very different from the Utrecht Psalter. It is more provincial in its art, although it is the work of quite good draughtsmen. Like Utrecht it is an art of drawing

[18] This was the view of W. Haubrichs, in 'Christentum der Bekehrungszeit', *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde,* iv (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981), p. 517. However Corvey has also been claimed, see Burkhard Taeger, 'Heliand', in *Verfasserlexikon* 3 (1981), col. 959–60. While Cyril Edwards, 'German Vernacular Literature', in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 153, points out that the manuscript evidence would argue for Werden.

[19] Suzy Dufrenne, *Les Illustrations du Psautier d'Utrecht: Sources et Apport Carolingien* (Paris: Ophrys, 1978), is near to a definitive discussion on the sources and iconography of this book, esp. pp. 25–68.



5. Utrecht Psalter: Psalm 23 (24), with detail of the Lord about to enter through the open city gates. © Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 32.

rather than a painterly art; coloured drawing one might say. But it is very different from the Utrecht Psalter in its whole concept of illustration, most of all in having a large cycle of pictures illustrating the Life of Christ. It is interesting that this, the largest surviving cycle of Christ illustrations from the Carolingian period, should come not in a Gospel Book but in connection with the Psalms. The fact is that the Carolingians were wary of illustrating the human life of Christ, partly because they were influenced by Eastern Iconoclasm which maintained that it was a sort of blasphemy to illustrate the human Christ when one could not also capture His divinity; partly (there was also Eastern influence here) they feared superstitious veneration of images which might be endowed with a magic of their own; and partly, they were confronted with the Adoptionist heresy, which seemed to deny the divinity of Christ, and of themselves representations of the human Christ would hardly help to counteract their heresy.[20] But it was acceptable to illustrate the life of Christ for purposes of prayerful reflection or for didactic purposes. A propos of didacticism, for example, the *Libri Carolini* produced under Charlemange in 793 taught how the Old Testament was revealed in the New Testament, and how much the New Testament was foreshadowed in the Old Testament.[21] Now obviously, if monks and nuns spent much of the day reciting the psalms, and given that the psalms themselves are frequently quoted in the Gospels to show how they were prophetically fulfilled in the life of Jesus, the Psalter was a prime instance of a vehicle both for reflecting in prayer on the Life of Jesus, and for showing how the Old Testament was revealed in the New Testament. No neglect of the Divinity here, nor anything like mere superstition. Saint Augustine made the same point, that the psalms were a means to meditate on the Life of Christ more positively. The psalter, he wrote, was a prayer for all Christians, for, in the psalms 'we pray to (Christ), through him, in him; and we speak with him and he speaks with us'.[22]

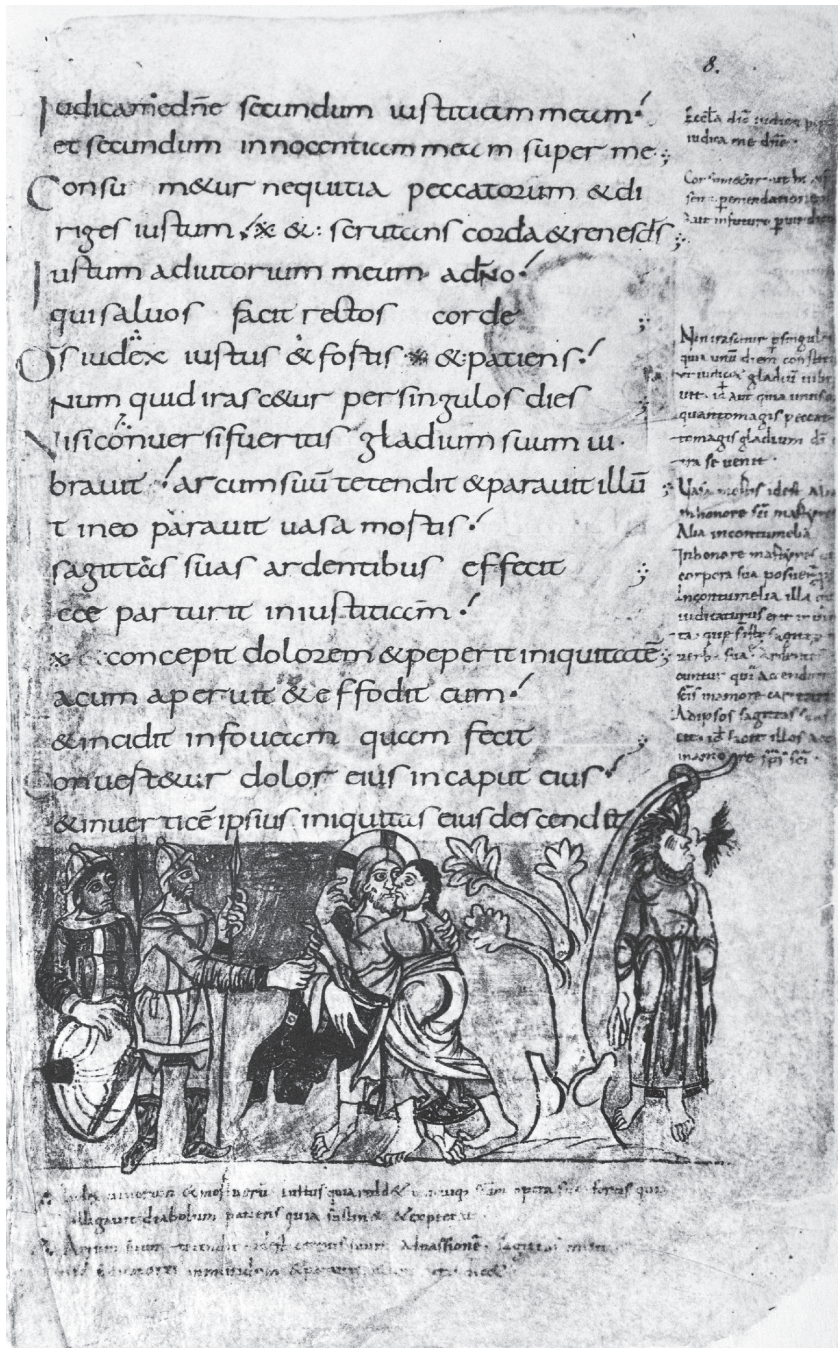
Much of the Stuttgart Psalter was related to these lessons (Ill. 6). Its illustrations show how the memory of Christ's life and especially his passion were fully *intended* to come into the mind, albeit perhaps fleetingly (but fleetingly can matter in prayer), while the psalms were recited. There are several illustrations of the Crucifixion, all where the psalms were taken to have a prophetic bearing on that event. The Kiss of Judas and his suicide, illustrating Psalm 7, vv. 15–16 f. 8r is an interesting example, because both

As she says, that there must have been some Rheims artistic input is shown by the illustrations of the Canticles in the same style, which can only have been Carolingian. Another indication that the Rheims artists had absorbed and could create art in this vibrant style for themselves is shown by the two Rheims ivories, also c. 830, illustrating Psalms 26/27 and 28/29, now in the Landesmuseum, Zurich, which are not exact copies of the illustrations in the Utrecht Psalter, nor of any known or deducible prototype. Illustration of the former in J. Hubert, J. Porcher and W. F. Vollbach, *Carolingian Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), no. 228, p. 248.

[20] See, for instance, Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne as a Patron of Art', as in note 7 above, esp. pp. 44–52. Very important now in this discussion are Chazelle, *The Crucified God* as in note 2 above esp. cc. 2 and 3; and Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000), esp. cc. 2 and 7.

[21] *Libri Carolini,* as in note 6 above, I, 44, ll. 37 ff. Also Paul Meyvaert, The 'Authorship of the Libri Carolini', *Revue Bénédictine* 89 (1979), esp. pp. 53–4.

[22] *Enarrationes*, CC 39, as in note 2 above, pp. 1176–7.



6. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 7, showing Judas' betrayal. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

Augustine and Cassiodorus in their commentaries connected this psalm to the despair of Judas:

> v.15 Behold he travaileth with mischief; he hath conceived sorrow and brought forth ungodliness.
> v.16 He hath graven and digged up a pit; and is fallen himself into the destruction that he made for another.

How large a cycle of the Life of Christ this book contains is shown by the fact that it even has iconographic rarities for the period like the Scourging at the Pillar. This illustrates here Psalm 34/35, v. 17 f. 43v (Ill. 7).

> Lord, how long wilt thou look upon this; O deliver my soul from the calamities which they bring on me, and my darling from the lions.

From early centuries sets of *tituli* to the psalms circulated, that is to say brief sentences which could be put at the beginning of each psalm to show how that psalm could be applied to Christ or the Church.[23] The *titulus* at the head of Psalm 34/35 in the Stuttgart Psalter, for this psalm which has the illustration of the Scourging at the Pillar, reads, 'De Passione dicit ad Patrem', 'about his Passion He (Christ) says this to the Father.'

The illustration of Jesus's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane while the apostles slept (Ill. 8), an iconography which certainly descends from a late antique exemplar, is placed in Psalm 30/31 to illustrate v. 6 f. 37r:

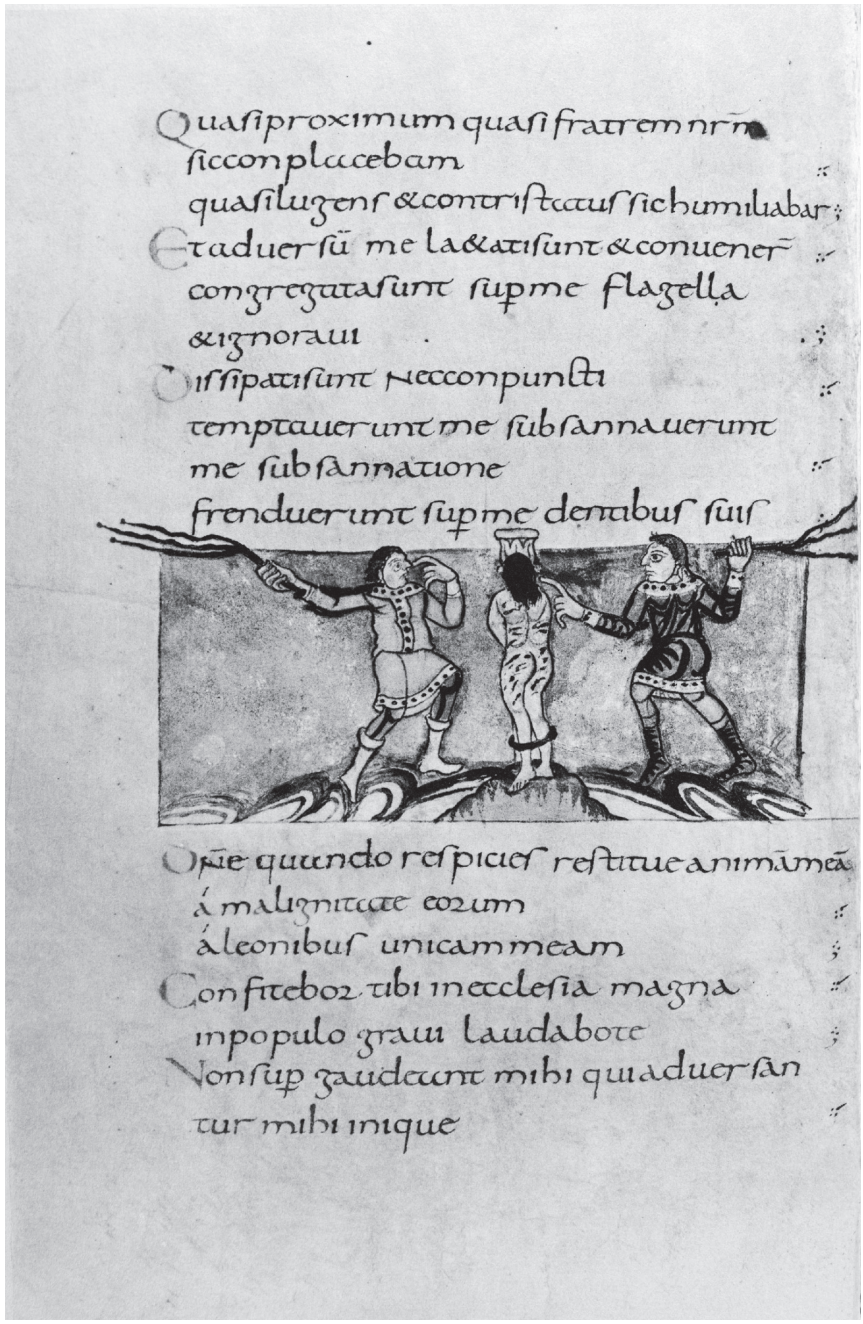
> Into thy hands I commend my spirit.

Jesus is not said to have quoted these words during the Agony in the Garden, but as one of his last sayings on the Cross. Hence the *titulus* of this psalm in the Stuttgart Psalter is: Vox Christi positi in cruce (the voice of Christ on the Cross).[24] It can be seen from this how *flexible* psalters could be in associating particular events in Christ's Life and Passion with particular psalm verses. There was not just one psalm verse connected with a particular Christ association. A *richness* of associations developed between Christ and psalm verses which allowed fleeting images of Christ to come constantly into the mind at many points in the psalms, allowing the psalms to be correspondingly rich in their meditational potential. In later Psalters the Garden of Gethsemane scene was sometimes used to illustrate Psalm 101/102, v. 1:

> Hear my prayer, O Lord; and let my crying come unto thee.

[23] The foundations of this subject were laid by Pierre Salmon, *Les 'Tituli Psalmorum' des Manuscrits Latins* (Vatican: Libreria Vaticana, 1959). Also useful is Helmut Boese, *Die Alte Glosa Pslamorum ex Traditione Seniorum* (Freiburg: Herder, 1982).

[24] The two *tituli* are both abbreviated versions from a series whose *tituli* combine extracts from Bede and the Commentary of Cassiodorus. As a series they appear to originate or at least become current in North Italy in the eighth century, P. Salmon, as above, pp. 151–52, 160, 159. The Stuttgart Psalter itself is considered by Florentine Mütherich to have a forerunner in a psalter made in North Italy.



7. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 34 (35), showing scourging of Christ. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

8. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 34 (35), Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

No more is Christ reported to have quoted this verse than psalm 30/31, v. 6, in the Garden. But both were appropriate verses with which to bring to mind His agony.[25]

It is worth pausing briefly here to consider how, if at all, the Christ scenes of the Stuttgart Psalter relate to the Christology of Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Clearly the latter was not a direct source. For example, Augustine himself did not connect Psalm 30/31 to the Agony in the Garden but to the saving force of Christ's passion in general. The same applies to Psalm 101/102, which Augustine related to the prayer of the troubled Christ. In his *enarratio* of Psalm 23/24, there is nothing on Christ's descent into the underworld, but only of his general triumph over death.[26] The Stuttgart Psalter applied the Augustinian principle of seeing Christ in specific psalm verses; but if Augustine's work influenced it, it was more in the way of his saying: 'you know my methods; apply them'.

It has already been shown how the Utrecht Psalter illustrates Psalm 23/24: *Attolite portas principes vestras*, which is translated in English as 'Lift up your heads, o ye gates'. One can see the totally different scene which illustrates the same verses in the Stuttgart Psalter, the Harrowing of Hell f. 29v (Ill. 9), when Jesus is said to have gone down after his death and rescued the righteous of Old Testament times from hell. The idea of the Harrowing of Hell comes not of course from one of the four Gospels, but from the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus. It would have a lively history in medieval iconography. The gates of hell, by which the gates of the psalm are here interpreted,

[25] For Psalm 101/102, see, for instance, Otto Pächt and Francis Wormald, *The St. Alban's Psalter* (London: Warburg Institute; University of London, 1960), the Psalter itself c. 1125, p. 242, and Plate 70d, and p. 270 of the manuscript. Dodwell here adduces the connection of thought with Augustine.

[26] *Enarrationes*, as in note 2 above, CC 38, p. 187; CC 40, p. 1427, ll. 45–47; CC 38, p. 136.

9. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 23 (24), showing the Harrowing of Hell. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

now literally lift up their heads while the King of Glory, Mighty in Battle, is *kicking* them in, rather unusually but magnificently.

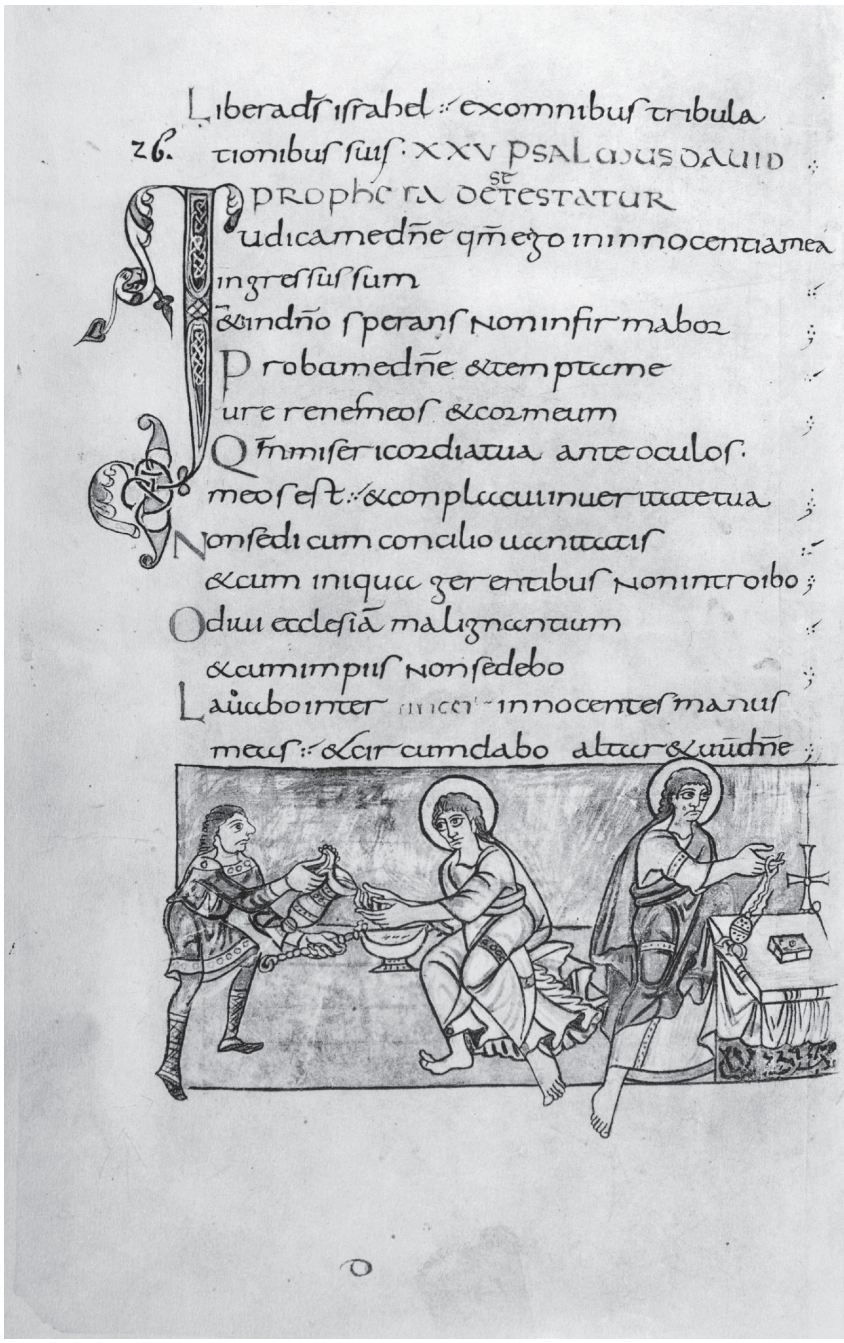
To judge from the Stuttgart Psalter, therefore, the minds of those who prayed the psalms were supposed to be darting constantly from the psalms to Christ and from Christ back again to the psalms. The same was the case, by analogy between the psalms and the Rule of St Benedict. The Rule is stiff with psalm citations. When a monk recited Psalm 138/139, for instance, he might remember the first degree of humility in Chapter 7 of the Rule, that man keep the fear of God before his eyes, remembering that all his thoughts are known to God, citing this psalm, 'Thou hast understood my thoughts from afar.'[27]

The same thing is true between the psalms and the liturgy of the mass. For Psalm 26/27, f. 31v the *Lavabo* (Ill. 10), the Stuttgart Psalter shows a scene with a hand-washing and a censing of the altar. Since the ninth century at latest this psalm has been recited at the Washing of the Hands and the Censing of the Altar at mass.[28] For Psalm 115/116, f. 67r the Utrecht Psalter illustrates vv. 12 and 13 with a rare example for this Psalter of a picture which is not literal but shows a figure (*Ecclesia*) collecting blood flowing from the side of the Crucified Christ into a chalice, a Eucharistic image (Ill. 11). This would become a very common iconography in the later Middle Ages, but I believe this to be the first example of it in the whole of Christian art. It illustrates the words *Quid retribuam domino* etc:

> What shall be my return to the Lord for all that he has granted me. I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

[27] *The Rule of St. Benedict,* trans. Justin McCann, as in note 13 above, p. 39.

[28] J. A. Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia* ii (Vienna: Herder, 1949), 97: 'since the Frankish period', i.e. the ninth century. This illustration would itself be evidence that the Lavabo was recited at the Hand-washing during the offertory as early as c. 830.



10. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 26 (27), showing the Lavabo (hand-washing) and censing of the altar. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

11. Utrecht Psalter: Psalm 115 (116), Crucifixion scene. © Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 32.

These psalm verses have been said at mass at least since the eleventh century and probably from the ninth, at the moment before the celebrant drank of the chalice at communion.[29] Again the mind passes between the office and the Eucharist.

All this was food for meditation not only in reciting the office, but quite outside it when in private prayer one brought the life and passion of Christ, or the psalms, to mind. The distinction between liturgical and private prayer can easily be overdone.

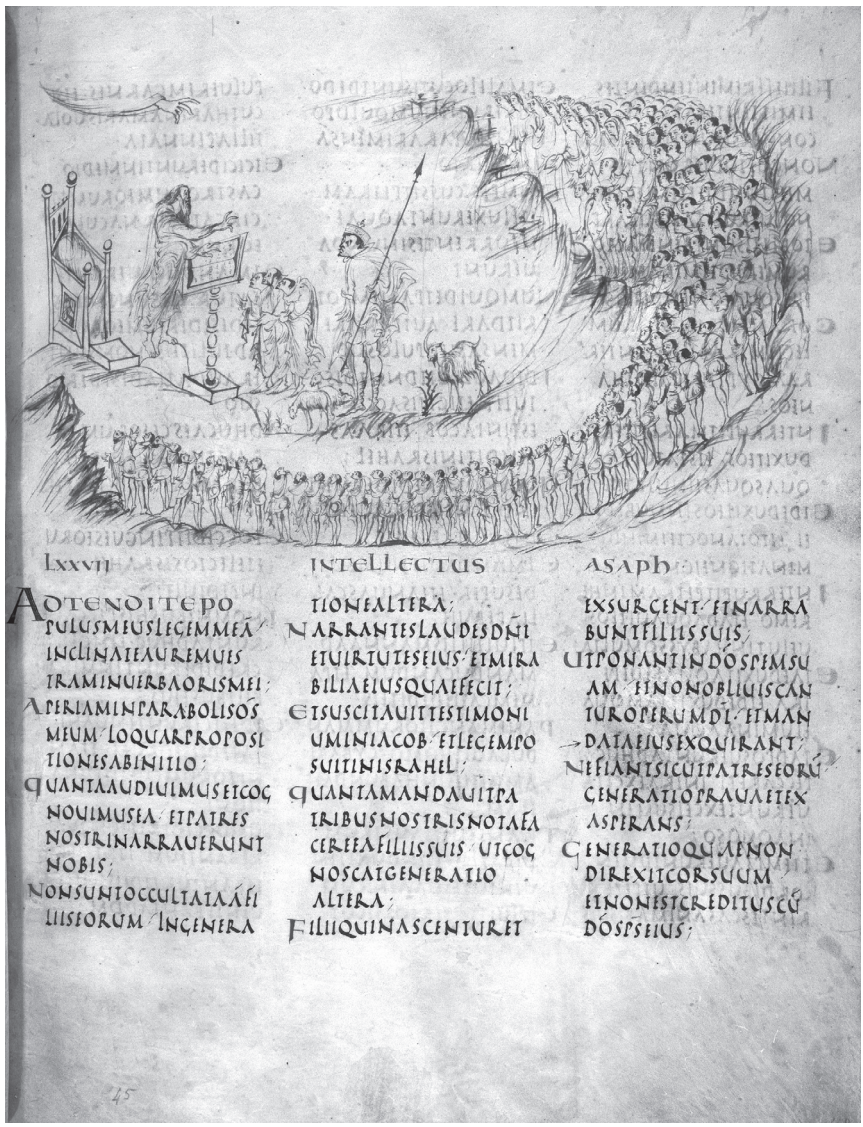
Only about a quarter of the 316 pictures in the Stuttgart Psalter are Christ scenes. There is also a sizeable number of Old Testament scenes, while more than half are literal representations of the text, though by no means always the same as those of the Utrecht Psalter. That being so, the reader might ask why I have concentrated so heavily on the Christ scenes. My answer is twofold. One, the Christ scenes represent a significantly large cycle for the Carolingian period (though certainly not unique, given, for instance, the similarly large cycle in the lost ninth-century wall paintings of St Gall).[30] Two, it is through the Christ scenes as an example that I have felt it easiest to explain an important principle of praying the psalter in Carolingian times – and since. Obviously many of the Old Testament scenes have also a direct Christ significance f. 45r (Ill. 12). So less directly do many of the literal scenes involving David. For as Florentine Műtherich pointed out in her marvellous study of the Stuttgart Psalter in the Facsimile edition, whereas in the Utrecht Psalter the prophets generically are the heroes, in the Stuttgart Psalter, David himself, the then putative composer of all the psalms, is the hero.[31] Sometimes he appears as a musical, crowned and enthroned king f. 155v (Ill. 13) but more often as a young man, an ordinary shepherd accompanying himself on a lyre, with his staff leaning against him, as in the touching scene of his singing the words of Psalm 42/43 f. 55r to his own soul, miserably seated on a hill, 'Why art thou sad O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?' (Ill. 14). Comic, perhaps, but one sees here a whole psychology (Platonist, dare one say) of the psalter. In the Stuttgart Psalter the great crowds of people and the external events of the Utrecht Psalter fall away, and David is alone with his own soul, his own joy and his own fears. One sees him, for instance, in flight, his cloak flapping in the wind, as if he had just come into the presence of God whose hand would protect him f. 30r. This seems to be an illustration partly of v. 1, in Psalm 24/25: 'let me not be confounded, neither let mine enemies triumph over me', and partly of v. 5: 'remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies; and thy loving-kindness which have been ever of old' (Ill. 15).

The illustration of this psalm in the Utrecht Psalter, also a literal interpretation, is significantly different. The prophet adopts a similar posture to that of David in Stuttgart. His hands are outstretched, but now as if less seeking personal protection and more as if illustrating v. 3: 'show me thy ways, O Lord; and teach me thy paths'. Behind him

[29] Jungmann, ii, 429: 'we find it already by the beginning of the eleventh century'. But the Utrecht Psalter itself speaks strongly as evidence that this practice goes back to the ninth century.

[30] Julius von Schlosser, *Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der Karolingischen Kunst* (Vienna: C. Graeser, 1892), no. vii, Carmina Sangallensia, pp. 326–31, for the c9 St Gall wall-paintings.

[31] Bernhard Bischoff, Florentine Mütherich etc al, *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter*, as in note 4 above, p. 167.

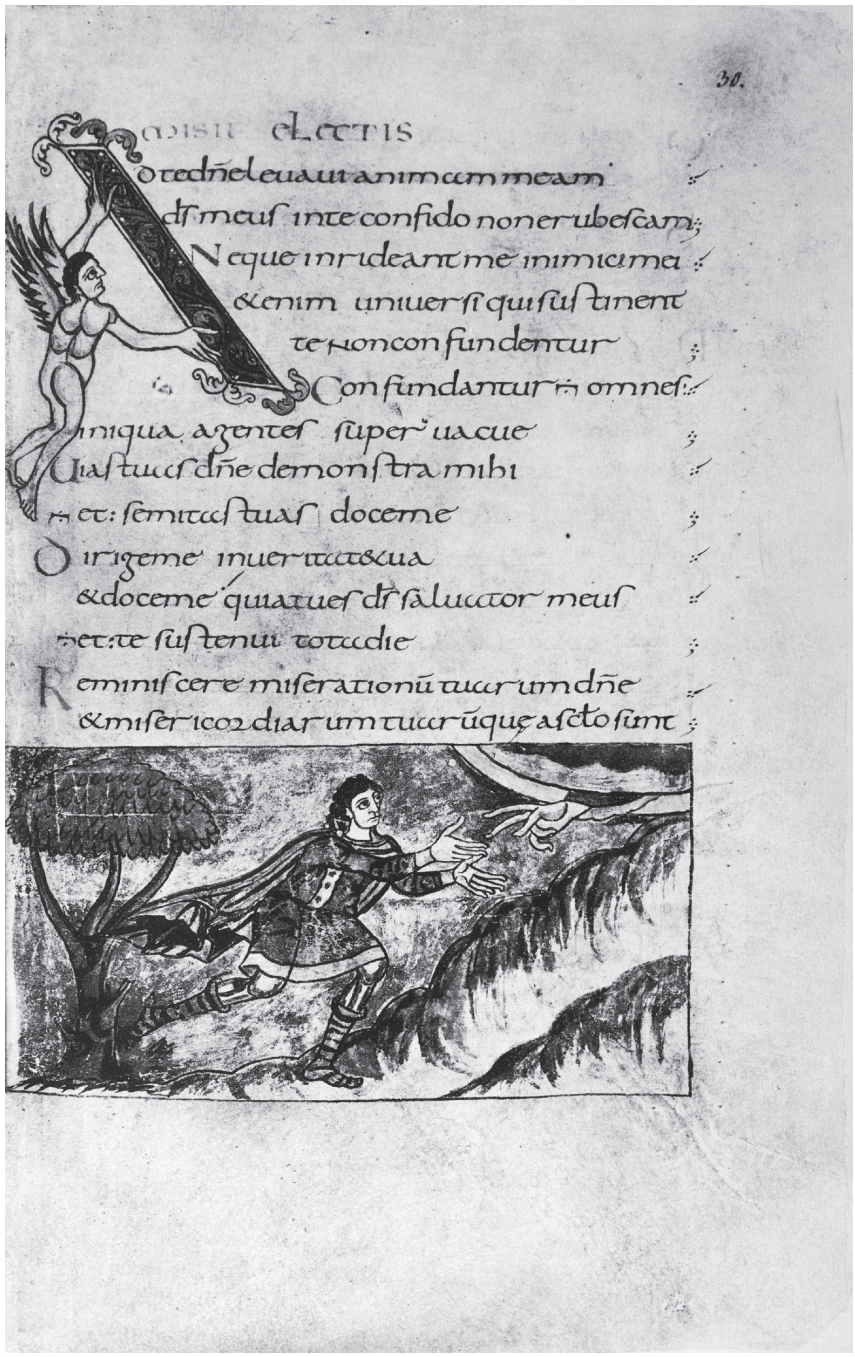


12. Utrecht Psalter: Psalm 77 (78), with image showing a prophet teaching. © Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 32.

13. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 140 (141), David playing the lyre. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

14. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 42 (430), David playing the lyre, and an 'afflicted soul'. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

is a crowd of men and below, to his left, is a whole army. He is far from alone. By no means do I intend here a comparison to the disadvantage of the Utrecht Psalter. The dramatic sense which it conveys of the enemies and the necessity to counteract them by following the paths of the Lord is wholly admirable, as is the baptismal scene in the lower right, which doubtless illustrates v. 9, f. 14r 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth' (Ill. 16). But it is very different from the Stuttgart Psalter. Here, in the latter and in its figure of David who moves so freely through its pages, a personal hero is set up whose human predicaments give plenty for one who prays the psalms to ponder.



15. Stuttgart Psalter: Psalm 24 (25), figure of David. © Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.

16. Utrecht Psalter: Psalm 24 (25), gathering of prophets in the middle, people with outstretched hands. © Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 32.

Let nobody imagine that I suppose the Psalters to have been used by anyone while actually reciting the office, which would have been difficult if not impossible. Nor do I presume to speculate on how precisely such images for meditation as those in our Psalters might have got from the manuscripts into the minds of people praying the psalter. One can think of various possibilities. What I do say is that the Psalters which have been discussed show some approaches to praying the psalter which might have been helpful in the ninth century – and at many other times.

In conclusion, if I had to use one word to describe the Utrecht Psalter it would be cathartic, emotionally cathartic; and for the Stuttgart Psalter it would be meditational. What explains the contrast between these two Psalters both dating from about 830? Is it that the Rheims book reflects all the pressures on Archbishop Ebbo and the Empress Judith at the time, whereas St Germain des Prés (Paris), from where the Stuttgart Psalter came, was situated in a more settled world and benefitted from the good administration of Abbot Irminon? Or is it rather that the two books show a swing from one way of praying the psalms to another, both ways fitting well together, as complementary ways, into our understanding of the same very rich and varied monastic culture of the time of Hrabanus Maurus? I prefer the latter explanation.

7

'The Brother Who May Wish to Pray by Himself'[1]: Sense of Self in Carolingian Prayers of Private Devotion

Renie Choy

In her important study on the place of Anselm in the history of prayer, the honoree of this volume demonstrated the archbishop's significance in comparative terms: Anselm's prayers were 'revolutionary', marking a 'break-through' and heralding a 'new age' in his intimate approach to monastic prayer as a platform for elaborate personal effusions.[2] The point of contrast – as Sr Benedicta and several other scholars have drawn – is with his 'immediate predecessors' the Carolingians, and the 'foregoing tradition' of the Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon collections of private prayer,[3] which were for the most part brief and liturgy-based, characterized by their 'plain severity' and 'archaic repetitions'.[4] The 'pre-Anselmian child of Adam' spoke in a colder, terser language of adoration, gratitude, submission and petition.[5] But, as Sr Benedicta astutely observed, Anselm, as did his near-contemporary Bernard of Clairvaux, came to devotional prayer

> from a starting point which was not that of their immediate predecessors, namely, the starting point of the emotions rather than the will. The inner movement of the monastic life was their concern, and it was this that Anselm and his circle of followers began to express in their prayers.[6]

This characterization about the differing 'starting points' of prayer is salient and loaded; specifically, we must unpack its claim about the Carolingians if the comparison is to hold up. What did Sr Benedicta mean by a 'starting point' in prayer? What is

[1] *Regula Benedicti* 52, trans. T. Kardong, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996): 'frater qui forte sibi peculiariter vult orare'.

[2] B. Ward, 'The Place of St. Anselm in the Development of Christian Prayer', *Cistercian Studies* 8 (1973), pp. 72–81, repr. *idem*, *Signs and Wonders: Saints, Miracles and Prayers from the 4th Century to the 14th* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1992), XVI, pp. 76 and 80.

[3] Ibid., p. 80.

[4] R. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059-c.1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 38–47, here at 47.

[5] R. Rulton, *From Judgement to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 150–5, here at 153.

[6] Ward, *Signs and Wonders*, XVI, p. 80.

the distinction between will and emotion in the approach to prayer? Was the 'inner movement of the monastic life' not a concern in the Carolingian prayers, and if it was, where was it if not most immediately expressed in emotion?

In this paper, I wish to appreciate Sr Benedicta's striking distillation of the Carolingian approach to private prayer as driven primarily by the will rather than by emotion. My interest lies in a particular type of prayer – or rather, a particular type of phrase – to which Alcuin was attracted, found frequently in Carolingian *libelli precum*. As a disseminator of Insular and Anglo-Saxon prayers and composer of several original ones himself, Alcuin influenced the entire 'orientation of continental piety' and had an 'immeasurable and subtle effect on the hearts and minds of generations of readers'.[7] We should thus trace the impact on Carolingian monastic thought of this particular prayer phrase upon which Alcuin seized.

Among the most striking of all the prayers in Carolingian *libelli precum* is what I would like to call the 'litany of possessives', containing the grammatical construction, 'You are my [*noun*] (*tu es* n. *meus/mea*)'. A ninth-century 'Prayer on the Holy Trinity' from the *Libellus Trecensis* has:

> Holy Trinity, You are my helper. Hear me, hear me my God. You are my living and true God. You are my holy father. You are my pious lord. You are my great king. You are my just judge. You are my one teacher. You are my timely helper. You are my most powerful doctor. You are my most beautiful beloved. You are my living bread. You are my priest in eternity. You are my clear wisdom. You are my pure simplicity. You are my catholic unity. You are my peaceful concord. You are my complete protection. You are my good portion. You are my eternal salvation. You are my great mercy. You are my most robust wisdom, Saviour of the world who lives and reigns, world without end, Amen.[8]

[7] J. Chazelas, *Les livrets de prières privées du Ixe siècle. Essai sur la théologie morale et la psychologie des fidèles*, Thèse de l'École des Chartes (Paris: RC, 1959), p. 56 ('Le rôle d'Alcuin a peut-être une importance plus grande que la part effectivement prise par lui à la composition ou à l'ordonnance de tel ou tel livret. . . . Alcuin, venu d'York, a pu lui-même apporter sur le continent l'amour de ces prières personnelles et répandre ces textes, au cours des loisirs que lui laissait sa retraite à Saint-Martin, c'est par là que son influence put être déterminante sur l'orientation de la piété continentale') and D. Bullough, 'Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven', in *idem*, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 161–240, at 169, both quoted in S. Waldhoff, *Alcuins Gebetbuch für Karl den Großen. Seine Rekonstruktion und seine Stellung in der frühmittelalterlichen Geschichte der* Libelli precum, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 89 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2003), p. 110, n. 303. See generally R. Constantinescu, 'Alcuin et les "libelli precum" de l'époque carolingienne', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 50 (1974), pp. 17–56, and D. Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 2013), pp. 175–7.

[8] Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1742, ed. A. Wilmart, *Precum libelli,* Libellus Trecensis 'Oratio de sancta trinitate', p. 13; cf. the same prayer in the Libellus Parisinus, ibid., p. 42: 'Auxiliatrix es tu mihi trinitas sancta. Exaudi me, exaudi me deus meus. Tu es deus meus vivus et verus. Tu es pater meus sanctus. Tu es dominus meus pius. Tu es rex meus magnus. Tu es iudex meus iustus. Tu es magister meus unus. Tu es adiutor meus oportunus. Tu es medicus meus potentissimus. Tu es dilectus meus pulcherrimus. Tu es panis meus vivus. Tu es sacerdos in aeternum. Tu es dux meus a patria. Tu es lux mea vera. Tu es dulcedo mea sancta. Tu es sapientia mea clara. Tu es simplicitas mea pura. Tu es unitas mea catholica. Tu es concordantia mea pacifica. Tu es custodia mea tota. Tu es portio mea bona. Tu

The insistent use of the first personal possessive pronoun marks these phrases off from mere metaphor (such as 'You are a king. You are a judge. You are a teacher'), and turns the prayer into something entirely personal and self-aware: they are phrases as 'egocentric' as one may find in speaking to God. But what exactly is the force behind this rich grammatical construction? Is it a doctrinal pronouncement of God's grace, an articulation of the human's state of complete corruption, utter incompetence and unworthiness?[9] Is it about Christ's substitutionary work of atonement or the imputation of Christ's merits upon the sinner as formulated centuries later by Luther and Melancthon?[10] Is it 'frantic whistling in the darkness of separation', as one commentator wrote about the same construction found in the prayers of George Herbert?[11] Or is this a philological demonstration of the limits of human language in making assertions about the Divine? Is it an imitation of the Semitic language of the Old Testament which relies on metaphors to speak about God?[12] Is it most basically an example of a peculiar grammar and an exercise in semiotic referencing and indexing, in structuring relationships between signifiers and the signified?[13]

The early medieval sources – exegetical, grammatical, rhetorical – which might have given some profoundly theological meaning to this dense grammatical expression are of no help at all. Bede, in his *De schematibus et tropis* (Concerning Figures and Tropes), invokes the phrase to illustrate something quite unrelated to the grammatical construction itself:

> Anaphora, or reduplication, occurs when the same word is used at the beginning of two or more verses, for example (Ps. 27:1-3): "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?".[14]

es salus mea sempiterna. Tu es misericordia mea magna. Tu es sapientia mea robustissima salvator mundi qui sine fine vivis et regnis in saecula saeculorum amen'. For a list of copies of this prayer found frequently in ninth-century prayer books, see P. Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', in *idem*, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800,* Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 273–327 at pp. 317–18 and p. 318, n. 187.

9. As in a typical Augustinian statement, 'God himself is our prize (*Deus ipse nobis praemium*)'. See Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 308 and n. 149, with reference to J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine. The Hulsean Lectures for 1938* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1991).

10 Based on such scriptural statements as 1 Cor. 1.30, Christ 'our righteousness, holiness, and redemption'. See broadly A. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (1986; 3rd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

11 T. Sherwood, *Herbert's Prayerful Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 51, on Herbert's frequent use of the first person possessive pronoun in his poetry, as for example in 'The Call': 'Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life. . . . Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength. . . . Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart'.

12 As in Ps. 18.2 ('The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. . . my strength . . . my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower) and 27:1 ('The Lord is my light and my salvation'. See, for example, S. McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

13 I. Robert (ed.), *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).

14 Bede, *De schematibus et Tropis* II.1.6, ed. C. Kendall, CCSL 123A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), p. 146, trans. G. H. Tannenhaus, 'Bede's *De schematibus et tropis* – A Translation', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 48(3), (1962), pp. 237–52, repr. J. Miller et al., (eds.), *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 100: '*Anafora,* id est, *relatio*, cum eadem dictio bis saepiusve per principia versum repititur, ut: "Dominus inluminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo? Dominus defensor vitae mea"'.

Cassiodorus, when discussing Psalm 17:2-3,

> The Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer. My God is my helper, and in him will I put my trust. My protector, and the horn of my salvation, and my support,

is interested only on the verses as an example of

> the twelfth type of definition, which Greeks call *kat'epainon* and Latin *per laudem*. His proclamation announces God's nature in individual and varying words: now *strength*, now *firmament,* now *refuge*, now *deliverer*, now *helper*, now *protector*, now *horn of salvation*. All these terms beautifully denote what the Lord is.[15]

According to Patrick Sims-Williams, the origin of these prayers which contain phrases beginning with 'Te . . .' or 'Tu . . .' are Gallican collects, which were then elaborated by the Irish into long rows of short titles in their prayers.[16] But phrases of this sort could also be excerpts from Augustine's *Confessiones* and *Soliloquies*, as in the following from the '*Oratio sancti Augustini*' found in the ninth-century Fleury Prayer Book, made up of extracts from the long prayer with which Augustine began his *Soliloquies*:

> O God, Creator of the universe, give me first that I may pray aright, then that I may conduct myself worthily of being heard by thee, and finally that I may be set free by thee. . . . Hear me, my God, my Lord, my King, my Father, my Cause, my Hope, my Riches, my Honour, my Home, my Fatherland, my Health, my Light, my Life. Hear me, hear me, in thine own way known to but few.[17]

Augustine had employed these phrases – distinctly constructed with a noun and a first person possessive pronoun – in his *Soliloquies* (as also in his *Confessions*) as a

[15] Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum* 'Expositio in psalmum XVII', ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 97 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), p. 151, trans. P. G. Walsh, *Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p. 177: 'Hic duodecima species dfinitionis est, quae graece dicitur, *kat'epainon,* latine per laudem. Singulis enim diversisque verbis praedicando declarat quid sit Dominis, modo *virtus,* modo *firmamentum*, modo *refugium*, modo *liberator*, modo *adiutor*, modo *protector*, modo *cornu* salutis. Haec enim omnia pulchre ostendunt, quis eius est Dominus'. The 'twelfth type of definition' follows Isidore, *Etymologies* II.29 on the kinds of definition in dialectics, in turn summarized from Marius Victorinus.

[16] Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 317 with reference to M. Curran, *The Antiphonary of Bangor and the Early Irish Monastic Liturgy* (Blackrock: Irish Academic, 1984), pp. 104–6, 113 and 155.

[17] MS Orléans 184 (Fleury Prayer Book), ed. PL 101:1383–1416, containing prayers of devotion including those composed by Alcuin ('Adesto, lumen verum', 'Miserere Domine, miserere Christe', and the 'Confessio peccatorum pura'). See M-H. Jullien and F. Perelman, *Clavis des auteurs Latins du moyen âge territoire Français, 735–987, tomus II: Alcuin* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), ALC 63, pp. 469–70. Here at PL 101:1397, trans. J. Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, Library of Christian Classics 6 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 23 and 25: 'Deus universitatis conditor, praesta mihi primum ut te bene rogem, deinde ut me agas dignum quem liberes, postmodum ut liberes . . . exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me, Deus meus, Domine meus, Rex meus, Pater meus, causa mea, res mea, honor meus, domus mea, patria mea, salus mea, lux mea, vita mea, exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me, Domine, more tuo illo paucis notissimo'. For Alcuin's knowledge of Augustine's *Confessiones* and *Soliloquia*, see Bullough, 'Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven', pp. 17–18; Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', pp. 304–7 with reference to P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans la Tradition Littéraire* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1963).

way to express his searching introspection and rigorous interior examination.[18] The prayer just quoted occurs in the context of Augustine's self-talk – a soliloquy, whereby he explores who he is so that he might know who God is. Indeed, a usual mode of discourse in Augustine's prayers is to ask a series of agitated questions and to emphasize the despair of an impossible personal situation before making affirmations about what God means to him. This is the moment of revelation, when discovery of himself leads to discovery of God: because his sin is so great, God is for the sinner what only He can be.[19] Although Anselm never quotes from Augustine in his *Orationes sive Meditationes*, he closely follows the style of Augustine, 'especially in the manner', writes Bestul, 'in which he is able to convey the sense of an anguished soul in urgent self-examination in the immediate presence of God'.[20] Invariably, it is such anxious personal scrutiny, the questions and conclusions about the good which he is not and the good which he cannot do, the deliberate self-exposure and uninhibited self-flagellation, which lead Anselm to make statements about what God means to him. Stylistically similar to Augustine's personal prayers, Anselm's prayers, Sweeney notes, thrive on the suggestion that 'the moment of darkest despair is the moment of greatest light'.[21] So Anselm seems to enjoy languishing in the turmoil of asking 'What shall I say? What shall I do? Whither shall I go? Where shall I seek him? Where and when shall I find him? Whom shall I ask? Who will tell me of my beloved?' before arriving at the statement 'God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever'.[22]

For scholars attempting to be precise about how exactly Anselm's Augustinian-style prayers depart from antecedents in the early Middle Ages, the lack of rigorous, anguished introspection in Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian prayers offers the starkest contrast. An untitled prayer in the early Anglo-Saxon Royal Prayer Book of the late eighth century is unmistakably indebted to Augustine:

> Good therefore is he who made me and he himself is my good, my strength, and my salvation, my summit and my honour, my trust and my support, my glory and my joy, my beauty and my delight.[23]

[18] What follows is reliant upon E. Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), chapter 2, 'Persuasion and the Narrative of Longing', pp. 13–37.

[19] Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury*, pp. 15–16 and 32, and also: G. Antoni, *La prière chez Saint Augustin: d'une philosophie du langage à la théologie du Verbe* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1997); M. Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); P. Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); P. Burton, *Language in the Confessions of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); B. Stock, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[20] T. Bestul, 'Antecedents: The Anselmian and Cistercian Contributions', in W. Pollard and R. Boenig (eds.), *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), pp. 1–32 at 5.

[21] Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury*, pp. 30–2, here at 32.

[22] Anselm, *Oratio* 2, ed. F. S. Schmitt, *S. Anselmi Opera Omnia* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946), vol. 3, p. 9, trans. B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm, with the Proslogion* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 97: 'Quid dicam? Quid faciam? Quo vadam? Ubi eum quaeram? Ubi vel quando inveniam? Quem rogabo? Quis nuntiabit dilecto . . .? . . . "Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in aeternum"'. See Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury*, pp. 32–3.

[23] London, British Library, Royal MS 2.A.xx, quoted and analysed in Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 305: 'Bonus est ergo qui fecit me et ipse est bonum meum, fortitudo mea, et salus mea,

Here, the phrases echo the close of *Confessions* 1 (I.19), but with the significant difference that the excerpter has left aside all the searching questions raised by Augustine at the opening of his work ('How shall I call upon my God, my God and Lord? . . . Lord my God, is there any room in me which can contain you?' 'Who will enable me to find rest in you? Who will grant me that you come to my heart and intoxicate it, so that I forget my evils and embrace my one and only good, yourself? What are you to me?') and left the positive statements alone behind.[24] The compiler, observes Patrick Sims-Williams, 'omits Augustine's explicitly autobiographical sentences, and fails to convey the subtlety of his introspection'.[25] Similarly, Alcuin used portions of Augustine's *Confessions* in his florilegium (unpublished), but deliberately left aside Augustine's 'searching introspection' to build a prayer.[26] Alcuin, 'the knowable individual carefully excerpting from the towering genius of introspection', thus offers us a bare prayer that has left Mary Garrison with 'a pang of disappointment at Alcuin's selection', for it 'illustrates something about the distance between my priorities and Alcuin's'.[27] It is significant that when Vincent Serralda saw evidence of Alcuin's self-awareness, his proof was the *Confessio Fidei* with its personal statements of anxiety, desire and longing, a work which turns out not to have been authored by Alcuin at all but is rather one belonging to the era of John of Fécamp.[28] More in line with the general tone of prayer in the ninth century, rather, is the '*Oratio in laudibus divinis, et gratiarum actionibus*' of the *Libellus Turonensis* compiled in the mid-ninth century. It contains no frills, no searching introspection, simply presenting the following statements without any prefatory self-flagellating material:

> I confess to you my Lord God. I confess one God, triune God, my Father. My king, My author. My life. My salvation. My redemption. My invigoration. My hope. My entity. My cause. My honour. My home. My patience. My light. My trust. My mercy. My only refuge.[29]

altitudo mea et honor meus, fuducia mea et firmamentum meum, gloria mea et guadium meum, decor meus et dulcedo mea'.

[24] Augustine, *Confessionum Libri XIII* I.ii.2; I.v.5, ed. L. Verheijen, CCSL 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), pp. 1–2, 3, trans. H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 3 and 5: 'Et quomodo invocabo deum meum, deum et dominum meum . . . .Et quis locus est in me, quo veniat in me deus meus?' 'Quis mihi dabit adquiescere in te? Quis dabit mihi, ut venias in cor meum et inebries illud, ut obliviscar mala mea et unum bonum meum amplectar, te? Quid mihi es?'.

[25] Sims-Williams, 'Prayer and Magic', p. 306.

[26] M. Garrison, 'The Study of Emotions in Early Medieval History: Some Starting Points', *Early Medieval Europe* 10(2), (2001), pp. 243–50 at 244: 'an emphasis', Garrison adds, 'that would have pleased Augustine himself'.

[27] *Idem,* 'An Aspect of Alcuin: "Tuus Albinus" - Peevish Egotist or Parrhesiast?', in R. McKitterick, R. Corradini, M. Gillis, and I. van Renswoude (eds.), *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters (Vienna: Verlag, 2010), pp. 137–51 at 139.

[28] V. Serralda, *La Philosophie de la Personne chez Alcuin* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1978), pp. 307–11. For a discussion of the false attribution to Alcuin and issue of authorship, see with bibliography D. Bullough, 'In Defence of the Biographical Approach. The Sources', in *idem, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation: being part of the Ford Lectures Delivered in Oxford in Hilary Term 1980* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 3–126 at 6–7, n. 9.

[29] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 13388, ed. Wilmart, *Libelli precum,* p. 92: 'Confiteor itaque tibi domine deus. Confiteor deus une, deus trinitas pater meus. Rex meus. Auctor meus. Vita mea. Salus mea. Redemptio mea. Vivificatio mea. Spes mea. Res mea. Causa mea. Honor meus. Domus mea. Patientia mea. Lux mea. Fidutia mea. Misericordia mea. Unicumque refugium meum . . . '.

And where Anselm can be noted for 'his revitalization [from Augustine] of the internal dialogue as a form for communicating subjective emotional intensity, for creating an introspective personal narrating voice',[30] in between the two greats of Augustine and Anselm are said to lie the Carolingians, in 'an age that preferred the transcendental to the introspective'.[31]

To my mind, there is a need to clarify this characterization, for it seems to repeat the assertion – now recognized as requiring a great many caveats – that the 'self' was not 'discovered' until the twelfth century.[32] It can hardly be disputed that something fundamental changed in the twelfth century which led to a heightened attention to human individuality (the development of more complex notions of self-evaluation, the encouragement of explicit expressions of self-reflection). But a recent strain in the historiography of the early Middle Ages wants to assert that authors before the twelfth century were already very skilled in 'the art of finding rhetorical expressions for inner experience', capable of focusing on moments of self-revelation.[33] To the question 'Y avait-il un "moi" au haut moyen âge?', Barbara Rosenwein has answered a definitive 'yes', arguing that the existence of early medieval individualities is blatantly apparent if we turn our attention to the highly self-referential expressions of emotional sentiments and feeling.[34] The declaration that there was no autobiography between Augustine and Abelard has now been recognized as blatantly erroneous: witness, as one example, the autobiographical writings of Valerius of Bierzo about his conversion and personal trials.[35] And in terms of prayer, it is overly simplistic to say that the Carolingians were wholly uninterested in the autobiographical contexts out of which statements to and about God were made: the self-reflective, searching and agitated questions of Augustine are reproduced word for word, for example, in a ninth-century prayer book now known as that of St John Gualbert.[36] Apparently the compiler of this prayer book was capable of seeing something valuable in the subjective grounding of Augustine's prayers. Put plainly, it is no longer sufficient

[30] Bestul, 'Antecedents', p. 5.

[31] Bullough, 'In Defence of the Biographical Approach', p. 119.

[32] The fundamental works: C. Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050–1200* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); W. Ullmann, *Individuum und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1974); C. W. Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980), pp. 1–17. For an excellent overview of the historiography on the individual in the Middle Ages, see B. Rosenwein, 'Y avait-il un 'moi' au haut moyen âge?', *Revue Historique* 307 (2005), pp. 31–52, especially discussion on pp. 31–43, and W. Pohl, 'Introduction: Ego Trouble?', in McKitterick et al., (ed.), *Ego Trouble*, pp. 9–22.

[33] Pohl, 'Introduction: Ego Trouble?', p. 12.

[34] Rosenwein, 'Y avait-il un 'moi' au haut moyen âge?'.

[35] *Ordo querimoniae, praefatio discriminis; Item replicatio sermonum a prima conversione; Quod de Superioribus querimoniis residuum*, ed. C. M. Ahern, *Valerius of Bierzo: An Ascetic of the Visigothic Period. The Autobiographical Writings*, Studies in Medieval History 11 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1949). See Pohl, 'Introduction: Ego Trouble?', p. 11 with references at n. 31.

[36] Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Sessorianus 95, f. 87, '*Alia oratio*', incipit 'Magnus es domine et laudabilis valde . . .', ed. PL 101:504–05. See A. Wilmart, 'Le Manuel de Prières de Saint Jean Gualbert', *Revue Bénédictine* 48 (1936), pp. 259–99 at 289, no. 67, and n. 5. The entire first part of this prayer is a quotation from the opening of Augustine's *Confessions*. Writes Wilmart, 'Le petit recueil monastique, assez particulier, que forme la suite des nos. 50–67, trouve donc une meilleure conclusion avec le développment personnel des *Confessions* de saint Augustin'.

to say that the Carolingians were uninterested in self-referential, self-conscious introspection.

The problem for us with regard to the early medieval tradition of prayer is that, as we have seen, for most of the time, compilers and composers of prayers such as Alcuin were mostly interested in getting to the point – arriving at the statements regarding the meaning of God for oneself without the agonizing introspection which Augustine and Anselm needed to get there. As egocentric as the litany of possessives are, the subjective point of despair, the emotional low point, is absent, deemed an unnecessary step for arriving at the affirmative, kataphatic statements about God. With prayers lifted out of their autobiographical context of anxious and humiliating self-examination, where then was the introspective self-revelation, the sense of self in the Carolingian approach to God? To put it simply, and to borrow Sr Benedicta's phrase which she used with Anselm in mind, where is the 'inner movement of the monastic life' as expressed in such trimmed-down Carolingian prayers?

To speak of the sense of self – introspection and self-revelation – which undergirds one's manner of linguistic expression towards God is really to speak about the soul. Augustine's prayers in *Soliloquies* exist because of his desire to know God and his own soul:

> *Augustine*. I have made my prayer to God. *Reason*. What then do you wish to know? *Augustine.* All that I have mentioned in my prayer. *Reason*. Briefly summarize it. *Augustine*. I desire to know God and the soul. *Reason*. Nothing more? *Augustine*. Nothing whatever.[37]

Just as prayer permeates Augustine's *Soliloquies* in his desire to know his soul and to know God, likewise Cassiodorus' sustained treatise on the soul concluded with what at first blush might appear to be an unrelated appendix, an *oratio* directed towards God. Heavily dependent on Augustine, Cassiodorus' *De Anima* methodically discusses the nature and functions of the soul and then offers an address to God 'in a spirit of self-abnegation', a concluding prayer which is 'thick with reminiscences of Augustine's confessional rhetoric', as the following excerpts make apparent:[38]

> Lord, since in us there is nothing for You to reward, but in You there is always something to bestow, save me from myself and preserve me in You. Wipe out my

[37] Augustine, *Soliloquiorum libri duo* I.ii.7, ed. W. Hörmann, CSEL 89 (Vindobonae, 1986), p. 11, trans. Burleigh, *Augustine,* pp. 26–7: '*A*. Ecce oravi deum. *R*. Quid ergo scire vis? *A*. Haec ipsa omnia quae oravi. *R*. Breviter ea conlige. *A*. Deum et animam scire cupio. *R*. Nihilne plus? *A*. Nihil omnino'. A statement repeated by Alcuin in his *De Ratione Animae* 1, ed. and trans. J. Curry, 'Alcuin, *De Ratione Animae:* A Text with Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Translation' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 1966), p. 39 and 73: 'Nec aliquid magis homini in hac mortalitate vivente necessarium est nosse quam Deum et animam' ('Indeed, nothing in this mortal life is more important for man to know than God and his own soul').

[38] M. Vessey, 'Introduction' to J. Halporn, trans., *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul,* Translated Text for Historians 42 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), p. 21 and n. 56. Augustine is the only author cited by name in the piece: M. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. 2. Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), p. 249.

> deeds and rescue what You have made. Then shall I be mine, when I have become Yours . . . let me indeed know what I can be with You. Let me understand who I am, so that I may attain to that which I am not . . . .(T)o love You is salvation, to fear You is joy, to find You is growth, to lose You is destruction.[39]

Such a subjective, self-reflective prayer concludes Cassiodorus' methodological discussion of the soul, and throughout the Middle Ages the prayer was seen to be valuable in its own right, existing in some manuscripts alone without the treatise to which it belongs.[40]

When Alcuin took to writing his own *De Ratione Animae* (On the Nature of the Soul, henceforth *DRA*), he also concluded his treatise with a prayer, a litany known by its first line '*Miserere*', which like Cassiodorus' *Oratio* also came to exist independently.[41] But, in keeping with the trimmed-down approach of Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian prayers, Alcuin's prayer (here quoted in full) is spare on deep, elaborate psychological introspection:

> Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, O my hope of mercy, have mercy.
> Lord have mercy, that I may believe in You.
> Lord have mercy, that I may know You.
> Lord have mercy, that I may love You.
> Lord have mercy, that I may hope in You.
> Lord have mercy, that my soul may live in You.
> Lord have mercy, that my flesh may delight in You.
> Lord have mercy, that my life may progress in You.
> Have mercy, Lord God the Father, *my glory, my life.*
> Have mercy, Christ the Savior, *my salvation, my strength.*
> Have mercy, Counseling Spirit, *my consolation, my light.*
> Have mercy, God, Trinity and Unity.
> I praise Thee, I adore Thee, I acknowledge Thee.
> *My peace, my hope, my praise, my light,*
> *My beauty, my blessedness,*
> Thine be praise, Thine be glory, Thine by thanksgiving, always and everywhere, world without end.[42]

[39] Cassidorus, *De anima, 'Oratio',* ed. J. Halporn, CCSL 96 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973), pp. 574–5, trans. Halporn, *Cassiodorus,* p. 282: 'Domine, quia in nobis non est quod remunereris sed in te semper est quod largiaris, eripe me a me et conserva me in te. Impugna quod feci et vindica quod fecisti. Tunc ero meus, si fuero tuus . . . .Qualis vero tecum possim esse cognoscam. Intellegam qui sum ut ad illud valeam pervenire quod non sum . . . .Te autem amare, salvari; formidare, gaudere; invenire, crevisse; amisisse, perire est'.

[40] See Halporn, CCSL 96, pp. 521–7 for manuscript circulation.

[41] Jullien and Perelman, *Clavis des auteurs Latins du moyen âge territoire Français, 735–987, tomus II: Alcuin*, ALC 17, pp. 121–5, and on the litany especially pp. 123–5. For edition and translation of *De Ratione Animae*, see n. 35 above. A new edition is currently being prepared by P. Szarmach for CCCM. For manuscript circulation of the *Miserere,* see J. Black, 'Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayerbooks: Alcuin and the Preface to *De psalmorum usu*', *Medieval Studies* 64 (2002), pp. 1–60 at p. 30 n. 68 and p. 31 n. 71. Douglas Dales also translates and discusses the *Miserere*, which he calls a 'penitential hymn' in *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, pp. 181–2.

[42] ed. Curry, 'Alcuin, *De Ratione Animae*', p. 71, trans. ibid., p. 96, italics mine:

> Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, tu misericordia mea, miserere mihi.
> Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut credam in te.

While the italicized portions are said to come directly from Augustine's *Soliloquies*, they are, following a practice we have already observed, lifted entirely without reference to the agitated psychological questioning which accompanies it in Augustine's work proper.[43] But it would be wrong to conclude flatly from this that Alcuin was uninterested in issues of cognitive self-reflection. Malcolm Godden's article 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind' placed Alcuin's *DRA* at the centre of influence on the Anglo-Saxon understanding of the mind and its functions, citing K. Werner's judgement that 'the psychological literature of the Christian Middle Ages is said to begin with Alcuin's *De Ratione Animae*'.[44]

As much as his *DRA* draws from Augustine's works on the soul, Alcuin made some subtle but significant departures, and these differences provide an important key to help us understand why Alcuin – though deeply interested in issues of the psychological self – would compose prayers which are not so intensely psychological.[45] Godden argued that unlike Augustine, Alcuin understood the soul as primarily an intellectual faculty, viewing the principal part of the soul as the *mens*, and equating the soul with the rational mind. Augustine saw the mind as only the better part of the human soul, and therefore the soul for him was not primarily an intellectual spirit. Alcuin distinguishes his thought from that of Augustine by making the intellect – one's capacity for self-conscious reasoning – the primary feature of the soul.[46]

Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut cognoscam te.
Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut diligam te.
Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut sperem in te.
Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut anima mea vivat in te.
Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut caro mea exultet in te.
Miserere Domine, miserere Christe, ut vita mea proficiat in te.
Miserere Domine, Deus Pater, gloria mea, vita mea.
Miserere Christe Salvator, salus mea, fortitudo mea.
Miserere Spiritus Paracletus, consolatio mea, illuminatio mea.
Miserere Domine, Deus Trinitas et Unitas.
Te laudo, te adoro, te confiteor,
Pax mea, spes mea, laus mea, lux mea,
Pulchritudo mea, beatitudo mea.
Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi gratiarum actio semper ubique in saecula sempiterna.

This verse prayer is also edited in E. Dümmler, MGH *Poetae* 1:303–04 and PL 101:649–50.

[43] Pierre Hadot argued that portions of this litany '*Miserere*', together with Alcuin's hymn '*Adesto lumen verum*', are modeled upon '*Hymni III de trinitate*' of Marius Victorinus, and further, that the portions which I have italicized show close resemblance to Augustine, *Soliloquies* I.i.4 and 1.1.3: '*spes mea . . . salus mea, lux mea, vita mea . . . beatitudo . . . pulcrhum*'. P. Hadot, 'Les Hymns de Victorinus es les hymnes *Adesto* et *Miserere* d'Alcuin', *Archives d'historie doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Âge* 27 (1960), pp. 7–16 at pp. 14–15.

[44] M. R. Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', in M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (eds.), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 271–98 at 271–2 and n. 2; K. Werner, *Der Entwickelungsgang der mittelalterlichen Psychologie von Alcuin bis Albertus Magnus*, Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Classe 25 (Vienna, 1876), p. 70; discussed in P. Szarmach, 'A preface, mainly textual, to Alcuin's *De Ratione Animae*', in B. Nagy and M. Sebök (eds.), *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways: Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), pp. 397–408 at 399.

[45] The key works of Augustine upon which Alcuin has drawn for his *DRA* are *De trinitate libri XV* and *De Genesi ad litteram libri XII*. Curry, 'Alcuin, *De Ratione Animae*', pp. 5–9.

[46] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', pp. 272–3. See also the chapter on 'Anglo-Saxon Psychology among the Carolingians', in L. Lockett (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin*

The true significance of this emphasis, I should like to suggest, lies in the work to which the *mens* – the intellectual spirit in the soul – should be applied. In between quotations from earlier sources (Augustine, *Soliloquia* I.2 and Isidore, *De differentiis rerum* 30), Alcuin inserts his own original statements, in a clear effort to elucidate his strong opinions concerning what the mind is to be used for:

> Accordingly therefore, since the soul is the better part of man, it befits the soul to hold sway and as if from a throne of royal power to command what, through what, when, where, and how it shall do with the body, and to ponder carefully what it shall bid each member do and what may suit each in the wants of its own nature. *And it behooves the soul to decide all this by the rational insight of the mind. . .* [47]

The soul is for Alcuin the seat of command over oneself, a command wielded through the process of careful pondering and rational deliberation. The subject of deliberation is how one should conduct his own life, as well as the larger matter of personal goals. Again, though sandwiched between quotations from earlier sources (Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* I.25.46 and Isidore, *De differentiis rerum* 31), this following statement is Alcuin's own addition:

> So, then, his life is well-ordered who *takes account of himself – what he is and whither bound* – and governs his desires and fleshly impulses with *rational forethought*.[48]

That early medieval writers may not have engaged in a level of written introspection matching the scrutiny and intensity of Augustine or Anselm does not then mean that they were incapable of a high degree of self-searching. As Mary Garrison has argued, Carolingian writers were capable of 'sophisticated self representation', especially through the use of a 'finely deployed control of expression' inspired by the renewed interest in Latin grammar and rhetoric. Just as Augustine had not been 'merely a master of introspection, but also a professor of rhetoric', Alcuin's compositions are highly deliberate rhetorical constructions of his own image.[49] And so it is through the resources of medieval Latin rhetoric that we might best be able to appreciate the sophistication of individual self-awareness of early medieval writers.

For Alcuin, 'taking account of oneself' by 'rational forethought' was closely tied to the classical rhetorical skill of deliberation. When Alcuin listed the 'three kinds of

Traditions (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), esp. pp. 281–312, and Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought*, pp. 212–15.

[47] Curry (ed.), 'Alcuin, *De Ratione Animae*', p. 41, trans. ibid., p. 74, italics mine: 'Proinde igitur quia melior pars est hominis anima decet eam dominam esse et quasi de sede regalis culminis imperare quid, per quae, vel quando, vel ubi, vel quomodo faciat membra et considerare diligenter quid cui membro imperet faciendum, quid cuique consentiat in desiderio suae naturae; et haec omnia rationabili mentis intuitu oportet eam discernere . . .'.

[48] Curry (ed.), 'Alcuin: *De Ratione Animae*', p. 43, trans. ibid., pp. 75–6, italics mine: 'Ita tandem oridnate vivit qui seipsum considerat quid sit et quo festinet si affectus animi vel carnales motus provida gubernat ratione'.

[49] Garrison, 'An Aspect of Alcuin', p. 142 with reference to Burton, *Language in the Confessions of Augustine*. In her article, Garrison demonstrates how Alcuin's habit of giving unsolicited admonition and exhortation to addressees in his epistolary correspondence was dependent on the rhetorical concept of *parrhesia* (frankness of speech made in freedom and good faith), demonstrating his conscious construction of his self.

questions' with which the art of rhetoric deals (demonstrative, deliberative and judicial), he turned to Cassiodorus' *Institutions* to provide the definition of the 'deliberative' – 'the kind devoted to persuasion and dissuasion', that is (as some manuscripts of Cassiodorus' *Institutions* read), 'what to seek, what to avoid, what to teach, what to prevent'.[50] The key feature of this kind of rhetoric is that it concerns itself with choice: the definition of deliberative speech in the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as 'either of the kind in which the question concerns a choice between two courses of action, or of the kind in which a choice among several is considered' was known also to Alcuin.[51] This understanding of the purposes of deliberative speech is seen too in Theodulf's *Libri Carolini*, following Isidore's *Etymologies*: orators call 'deliberative' speech as that which

> treats questions of expediency in life, what ought or ought not to be done. . . . The deliberative kind is so called because in it one deliberates (*deliberare*) concerning some matter. And within this there are suasion and dissuasion, that is, concerning what ought to be sought and what ought to be avoided, what ought to be done and not done. Further, in suasive argument two things are especially effective: hope and fear.[52]

Thus, Alcuin's seemingly irrelevant discussion with Charlemagne about 'Virtues' at the end of a treatise on rhetoric makes sense if seen as an example of deliberative oratory, following the model of Cicero, who had given an analysis of virtues in *De inventione* 2.53.159-65 to define the moral function and objectives of this particular type of speech.

Likewise in Alcuin's *DRA*, at the end of a treatise which has insisted upon the soul's primary function as the seat of self-conscious deliberation about the state and goals of one's life, Alcuin offers a concluding prayer that expresses not the psychological crises of a tenuous soul, but the conscious choice made by a rational soul. Read as a response to the question Alcuin says one must ask in his mind – 'what he is

[50] Alcuin, *Disputatio de rhetorica et de virtutibus sapientissimi regis Karli et Albini magistri 5*, ed. and trans. W. Howell, *The Rhetoric of Alcuin and Charlemagne: A Translation, with an Introduction, the Latin Text, and Notes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 70–1: 'Deliberativum est in suasione et dissuasione'. For Alcuin's source here, see ibid., n. p. 160. For the addition in the *Delta* family of manuscripts of Cassiodorus' *Institutions*, see Halporn, *Cassiodorus: Institutions*, p. 180 and n. 29. The quotation here is from Cassiodorus' *Institutions* II.3, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 98, n. to line 14: 'hoc est, quid appetere, quid fugere, quid docere, quid prohibere'.

[51] *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium, De ratione dicendi* III.ii, ed. and trans. H. Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann; Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 156–7: 'Deliberationes partim sunt eiusmodi ut quaeratur utrum potius faciendum sit, partim eiusmodi ut quid potissimum faciendum sit consideretur'. On Alcuin's knowledge of *Ad Herennium*, see L. Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne,* Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 32 (Ithaca, 1959), pp. 36 and 45; Garrison 'An aspect of Alcuin', p. 149, n. 77.

[52] Theodulf of Orléans, *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* (*Libri Carolini*), ed. A. Freeman, III.14, MGH Concilia II, suppl. 1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1998), pp. 392–3, excerpted from Isidore, *Etymologiae* II.iv (*De rhetorica et dialectica*), trans. S. Barney et al., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 69 (used here): 'Est enim genus causae, quod oratores deliberativum dicunt, in quo genere de quibuslibet vitae utilitatibus, quid aut debeat aut non debeat fieri, tractatur. Sunt enim in eo suasio et dissuasio, id est de expetendo et fugiendo, de faciendo et non faciendo. In suasione autem duo sunt fortiora, spes et metus'. Isidore further clarifies that the 'deliberative argument sometimes deals with oneself alone'.

and whither bound' – the *Miserere* prayer shows itself to be a strong statement of resolve, the product of rational forethought and deliberation, rather than a cry of a frustrated, desperate soul. The inclusion of this same *Miserere* prayer within another one of Alcuin's works – this time explicitly on prayer – is revealing. *De psalmorum usu* (On the Uses of the Psalms) is a major collection of prayers of private devotion once attributed to Alcuin, but actually compiled in the mid-ninth century following Alcuin's death in 804.[53] Alcuin's authorship, however, has been accepted for the prefatory text of the work, often entitled '*De laude psalmorum*' or '*De virtutibus psalmorum*', which describes the value of the psalms and prescribes specific psalms for eight uses (penance, prayer, praise, in times of temptation, world-weariness, tribulation, regained prosperity, and for the contemplation of divine laws). In most manuscripts of '*De laude psalmorum*', the prayer *Miserere* (which as we have seen originally formed the conclusion to Alcuin's *DRA*) is included at the beginning of psalm use 2.[54] This use of the psalm is simply stated as '*Si vis orare*', 'if you wish to pray', and the psalms prescribed by Alcuin for this purpose are those which rouse the soul: 'Ad te, Domine, levavi animam mea', 'To you, O Lord, I have lifted my soul'.[55] By way of introducing this psalm use, the *Miserere* prayer inserted here functions as a statement of resolve: this is the prayer of one who 'wishes to pray' and knows it and wills it, not of one emotionally paralysed by the impossible situation of how to speak before an infinitely transcendent God.

Here, then, is prayer as persuasion – but it is not persuasion of God. Theodulf of Orléans had invoked the example of the deliberative argument in his *Libri Carolini* to point out the fact that the Greeks were foolish to think they could persuade God. Rather, this is persuasion of oneself: note the insistent first person pronouns 'I' and 'my' throughout the *Miserere* prayer. It is a highly self-centred prayer and the prayer is almost a self-talk, for the pervasive first person pronouns make it an argument about the advantage of God for Alcuin himself. We can almost hear Alcuin resolving to fear and worship God *because* (as he is attempting to persuade and remind himself) the Triune God *is* his glory, his life, his salvation, his strength, his consolation:

> I praise Thee, I adore Thee, I acknowledge Thee.
> My peace, my hope, my praise, my light,
> My beauty, my blessedness . . .

Alcuin's religious language is thus squarely grounded upon his belief in the psychological powers of the soul-mind – in other words, one's mental will.

[53] See Black, 'Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayerbooks' with reference to Wilmart, 'Le manuel de prières de saint Jean Gualbert', pp. 263–5.

[54] For manuscript information, see Black, 'Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayer Books', pp. 30–1.

[55] Psalm use two quoted in full, ed. Black, 'Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayer Books', pp. 52–3: 'Si vis orare, permitte mentem tuam in virtute psalmorum quorum initium est: Ad te, Domine, levavi animam meam; et Deus, in te speravi, Domine; necnon Inclina, Domine; et Domine Deus, in adiutorium meum; Deus in nomine tuo; Deus misereatur nobis; Exaudi, Domine, iustitiam meam; et nullatenus potes tua propria lingua nec humano sensu tam perfecte miseriam tuam ac tribulationem angustiamque diversarum temptationum explicare et illius misericordiam implorare quam in his psalmis et ceteris his similibus'.

Writing approximately two decades after Alcuin, the Carolingian monastic reformer Smaragdus of St Mihiel produced a *Commentary on the Rule of Benedict* that is for the most part evenly instructive and moralizing in tone. But, when elaborating on the *Rule of Benedict*'s teaching that 'nothing is dearer to us than Christ', he breaks suddenly into a poetic litany in the style of a devotional prayer:

> [W]hile we live in this mortal body Christ is our hope, Christ our defense, Christ our guidance, Christ our fortitude, Christ our solace, Christ our redemption, Christ our shepherd, salvation and protection, Christ our justification, sanctification and enlightenment. And in the future world our glory will be Christ, our exultation Christ, our glorification Christ, our peace Christ, our inheritance Christ, our eternity Christ, our light Christ, our brightness Christ, our health Christ, our crown Christ, our wisdom Christ, our kingdom Christ, our reward Christ, our joy Christ, our gift Christ, our honor Christ, our refreshment Christ, our rest Christ, everything of ours that is good, everything holy, everything lovable, everything desirable Christ; and therefore it befits us to hold nothing dearer to us than Christ. For in him and through him we live and move and have our being.[56]

The possessive pronoun: this word, Smaragdus wrote, should never be heard from a monk's lips. His *Liber in partibus Donati* (On the Parts of Donatus) is a statement of his belief that grammar allows us to penetrate the mysteries of Scripture and that words must be used precisely and correctly because they carry eternal meaning.[57] When he wrote his chapter '*De pronomine*' ('Concerning the pronoun'), Smaragdus repeated Donatus' definition of 'finite pronouns which are called possessive, such as *meus tuus suus*', providing the examples of 'my codex, my horse'.[58] Then comes a 'spiritual' interjection which Rädle has called 'entirely irrelevant':[59] 'Truly indeed [this pronoun] is called "possessive," because whatever I call "mine," I show myself to possess

[56] Smaragdus, *Expositio in Regulam S. Benedicti* 5, eds. A. Spannagel and P. Engelbert, CCM 8 (Siegburg: Schmitt, 1974), p. 150, trans. D. Barry, *Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, Commentary on the Rule of St Benedict*, Cistercian Studies Series 212 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007), p. 249: 'Christus est ergo, dum in hoc mortali corpore vivimus, spes nostra, Christus defensio nostra, Christus gubernatio nostra, Christus fortitudo nostra, Christus solatium nostrum, Christus redemptio nostra, Christus pastor, salus et protectio nostra, Christus iustificatio, sanctificatio et inluminatio nostra. Et in futuro saeculo erit gloria nostra Christus, exsultatio nostra Christus, glorificatio nostra Christus, pax nostra Christus, hereditas nostra Christus, aeternitas nostra Christus, lux nostra Christus, claritas nostra Christus, sanitas nostra Christus, corona nostra Christus, sapientia nostra Christus, regnum nostrum Christus, praemium nostrum Christus, gaudium nostrum Christus, munus nostrum Christus, decus nostrum Christus, refectio nostra Christus, requies nostra Christus, omnia bona, omnia sancta, omnia amabilia, omnia desiderabilia nostra Christus; et ideo nihil carius convenit nobis habere quam Christum. In illo enim et per illum vivimus, movemur et sumus'.

[57] V. Law, *Grammar and Grammarians in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 140–4.

[58] Smaragdus, *Liber in partibus Donati* 'De pronomine', eds. B. Löfstedt, L. Holtz, and A. Kibre, CCCM 68 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), p. 97 (capitalized words following Donatus): 'Sunt FINITA pronomina, quae et POSESSIVA dicuntur, ut MEUS TUUS SUUS, quae ideo "finita" dicuntur, quia pro finitis nominibus ponuntur, ut "meus codex," "meus equus"'.

[59] F. Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd von Saint-Mihiel* (Munich: Verlag, 1974), p. 59: 'Auch in der Abhandlung über das Possessiv-Pronomen findet man eine eigentlich sachfremde Einmischung geistlicher Gesichtspunkte'.

that thing; no holy monk contains this word in his mouth'.[60] Having spoken of the possessive pronoun in such harsh terms, Smaragdus must therefore be acknowledged to be doing something very intentional in his use of words when he composed this litany of possessives. What does it mean here, at the heart of the commentary on the prologue to the *Rule of Benedict*?

The answer is found itself in Smaragdus' *Commentary*, which as a document of the ninth-century monastic reforms led by Benedict of Aniane is very enlightening about the concerns of the age. Within Carolingian attempts to reform monasticism and to establish a high standard of morality among the professed religious, the mental will, the reason-led deliberation of the soul, took centre stage in the rhetoric of the reformers. The Carolingian attempt to revive the monastic vows of profession are a witness to this. The vast majority of monks in Carolingian abbeys had entered as child oblates whose vows had been made via a *petitio* offered by their parents, and who therefore had known no dramatic conversion of the type experienced by the adult novice.[61] Given this fact, the level of attention which reformers such as Benedict of Aniane (a friend and contemporary of Alcuin) and Smaragdus of St Mihiel placed on the profession formula – and particularly their reinsertion of the third vow of the '*conversatio/conversio morum*' – for use by the adult novice is a great surprise.[62]

When Smaragdus wrote his *Commentary on the Rule of Benedict*, he devoted a large section to discussing the procedure for receiving child oblates, but also an equally lengthy one for that for receiving adult converts. Having earlier identified 'reason' as 'a certain movement of the spirit sharpening the mind's sight and distinguishing the true from the false' and a feature of 'the human mind when it judges right', Smaragdus then comments on the following passage from the *Rule of Benedict* 58, 'On the procedure for receiving brothers':[63]

> [I]f, after deliberating with himself, he promises to take care in all things and carry out every task given him, then let him be received into the community, knowing that it is stated in the law of the Rule that from that day forward it is not permitted to him to leave the monastery, nor shake his neck from the yoke of the Rule that he was free to reject or accept after such exacting deliberation.[64]

[60] Smaragdus, *Liber in partibus Donati* 'De pronomine', ed. CCCM 68, p. 97: '"Posessiva" vero ideo, quia quicquid meum dico, possidere me illud ostendo; quod verbum sanctus monachus non continet ore'.

[61] M. de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[62] R. Choy, 'The Deposit of the Monastic Faith: The Carolingians on the Essence of Monasticism', in P. Clarke and C. Methuen (eds.), *The Church on its Past*, Studies in Church History 49 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), pp. 71–83.

[63] Smaragdus, *Expositio* Prologue, ed. CCM 8, p. 48, trans. Barry, *Commentary*, p. 106; second quotation from Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI.1.13: 'ratio, motus quidam animi visum mentis acuens, veraque a falsis distinguens. Mens hominis "dum recta iudicat, ratio est . . . ."'.

[64] *Regula Benedicti* 58, ed. B. Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 6 (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 188, trans. ibid., p. 189: 'Et si habita secum deliberatione promiserit se omnia custodire et cuncta sibi imperata servare, tunc suscipiatur in congregatione, sciens et lege regulae constitutum quod ei ex illa die non liceat egredi de monasterio, nec collum excutere desub iugo regulae quem sub tam morosam deliberationem licuit aut excusare aut suscipere'.

Smaragdus here quickly provides the definition of 'having had deliberation with himself' in these terms: '"Having had" comes from "having", while "deliberation" means "meditation or discussion"'.[65] He then moves on to what is one of the most striking passages in his *Commentary*, an example in the style of 'deliberative argument' showing the process of self-persuasion. By way of commentary on the monastic vow which the monk was to make,[66] Smaragdus offers a model 'monologue' to elaborate on what the novice should really be thinking in his mind as he says his words of profession. This speech – not quite a soliloquy because it is made as if directed to an audience of monks, but also not a speech in truth because it is actually rehearsed in his own mind – begins, 'As I pay careful attention to the first beginning of my monastic life, I can see that an easy entrance into the monastery was not granted to my request at first'.[67] It then proceeds to list out all the ways that the senior tried and tested his intention for a period of a year as he described the life of trial and humiliation that the monk should expect to face. As evidence of deliberation with oneself, the novice says (to himself),

> But I, strengthened by the example of David, used to cry out to the Lord: "Because of the words of your lips I have kept hard ways," knowing with the utmost certainty that, if I am a sharer in the passion of Christ, I shall also be a sharer in his resurrection. Strengthened by these and similar divine utterances, I used to promise that I would suffer everything with constancy for the sake of eternal life.[68]

The function of this monologue is to demonstrate that the novice has executed rational forethought and self-searching:

> Therefore, seeing this very well-ordered and prolonged space given to me, leaving aside all hesitation I earnestly beg of you with tears to deign to make me a member of your community. I have already held wholesome deliberation with myself about salvation . . .[69]

This monologue is highly and rhetorically self-aware, rehearsing the novice's conscious and deliberate making of a choice and process of self-persuasion in the taking up of a religious vow.

Returning now to Smaragdus' litany of possessives, we see that it is a passage full of persuasive force. The writer has prefaced the passage with a question in the style of

[65] Smaragdus, *Expositio* 58, ed. CCM 8, p. 295, trans. Barry, *Commentary*, p. 472: 'Habita enim ab habendo vocatur, deliberatio autem meditatio vel tractatio dicitur'.

[66] Smaragdus, *Expositio* 58, ed. CCM 8, p. 295: 'Ego ille in hoc monasterio sancti illius promitto stabilitatem meam et conversationem morum meorum et oboedientiam secundum regulam sancti Benedicti coram deo et sanctis eius'.

[67] Ibid., trans. Barry, *Commentary*, p. 473: 'Monachatus mei tyrocinium diligenter adtendens considero, quod petitioni meae primum non facilis monasterii concessus est introitus. . .'.

[68] Ibid., ed. CCM 8, p. 296, trans. Barry, *Commentary*, p. 474: 'Ego autem Davidico confortatus exemplo domino clamans aiebam "Propter verba labiorum tuorum ego custodivi vias duras," certissime sciens, quia si particeps Christi passionis fuero, et resurrectionis ero. His et similibus divinis conforatus oraculis omnia me constanter perpeti pro vita profitebar aeterna'.

[69] Ibid.: 'Hunc ergo videns ordinatissimum atque morosum mihi spatium adtributum, dubitationis aditu praetermisso ut me vestro iam corpori sociare dignemini lacrimabiliter rogitans deposco. Ego vero mecum iam salvationis deliberatione salubriter habita . . .'.

the best deliberative rhetoric of persuasion: 'Who can be so foolish and stupid as not to want to love his life and salvation?'[70] This rhetorical question sets up the answer, found in Smaragdus' great prayerful litany:

> For Christ is our life and salvation, who said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Therefore, while we live in this mortal body Christ is our hope, Christ our defense, Christ our guidance, Christ our fortitude, Christ our solace, Christ our redemption, Christ our shepherd, salvation and protection, Christ our justification, sanctification and enlightenment. And in the future world our glory will be Christ, our exultation Christ, our glorification Christ, our peace Christ, our inheritance Christ, our eternity Christ, our light Christ, our brightness Christ, our health Christ, our crown Christ, our wisdom Christ, our kingdom Christ, our reward Christ, our joy Christ, our gift Christ, our honor Christ, our refreshment Christ, our rest Christ, everything of ours that is good, everything holy, everything lovable, everything desirable Christ . . .[71]

And so the litany of possessives, as if a note to the soul in the process of deliberation with oneself concerning his salvation, culminates in the conclusion, 'Therefore we must hold nothing else whatever dearer than him.' This litany, then, speaks to the monk's mental will, rousing the psychological powers of the individual 'who takes account of himself – what he is and whither bound'.[72]

The litany of possessives as constructed by Smaragdus is fundamentally related to the passage of time: what Christ is for the individual while 'in this mortal body', and what He will be in the 'future world'. Forming the basis for the monk's deliberation about his life and salvation was the most basic fact of time and its accompanying changeability:

> Time changes for the ill-willed rich, and it changes also for the holy poor: for the former, so that from the spacious way of pleasure they may cross over to the narrow punishment of hell, for the latter, so that from the present narrowness of the world they may cross over to the very wide and very bright glory of heaven; the former, that they may change from a soft and dissolute life to the narrowness of the lower depths, the latter, that they may cross over from the narrow and restricted activity of the body to the broad kingdom of heaven.[73]

[70] Smaragdus, *Expositio* 5, ed. CCM 8, p. 150, trans. Barry, *Commentary*, p. 249: 'Quis enim tam stultus et hebes potest efficere, ut vitam et salutem suam non velit diligere?'

[71] As above, fn. 56, with the additional first sentence, 'Christus est enim vita et salus nostra, qui dixit "Ego sum via, veritas et vita"'.

[72] Above, fn. 48.

[73] Smaragdus, *Expositio* 5, ed. CCM 8, p. 152, trans. Barry, *Commentary*, p. 253: 'Mutatur enim tempus malignis divitibus, mutatur et sanctis pauperibus. Illis ut de spatiosa voluptatis via ad angustas inferni transeant poenas, isti ut de praesenti saeculi angustia ad caeli latissimam atque clarissimam transeant gloriam; illi ut de molle et dissoluta vita ad angustum mutentur tartarum, isti ut de angusto et violento corporis actu ad amplum caeli transeant regnum'.

Indeed, Smaragdus shows a keen interest in the notion of time and change. A statement as mundane as 'For he [Christ] must at all times be obeyed . . .' (RB Prologue) is an occasion for Smaragdus to delve into the etymology of 'time' as related to the movement of the stars and the way they have been set 'in some variable motion, one element of which has gone past sooner, another later, because they cannot exist simultaneously'.[74]

Time, that aspect of existence which reminds the human of his mortality, was a reality which all individuals – but the monk in particular – was asked to face. As such, time gave a special character to the monk's deliberations out of which the type of prayers we have been examining arose. Litanies of possessives are found not only in *libelli precum*, but also equally in the elegiac verses which Alcuin composed. Such elegies were laments – laments due to an absence, upon a departure, for an individual, for a way of life, for a beloved place – and it was while mourning the passage of time, the mutability and transience of mortal life, that Alcuin wrote some of his most wilful theological statements. In *Carmen 37*, Alcuin on the occasion of a departure from the court repeatedly bids Angilbert and Charlemagne 'farewell':

> Say, say to David, 'Farewell always and everywhere',
> David friend of Flaccus, 'Farewell always and everywhere'.[75]

In the middle of his repeated farewells, Alcuin writes,

> Let Christ be loved, the light, way, life, salvation of all,
> Let Christ be our light, way, life, salvation.[76]

Many of Alcuin's poems dwell on the subjects of mutability and the transience of time, culminating in the renowned elegy on his cell in Aachen:

> O my cell, my sweet, beloved dwelling,
> forever and ever, o my cell, farewell.[77]

For 30-odd lines Alcuin mourns the decline of the home of intellectual learning which he had enjoyed in the palace school at Aachen:

> Why do we wretches love you, fugitive world?
> You always fly headlong from us.[78]

[74] Ibid., Prologue, ed. CCM 8, p. 20, trans. Barry, *Commentary,* pp. 67–8, following Isidore, *Etymologiae* V.29: '"Tempora autem a motu siderum sunt dicta." Unde et deus cum haec instrueret dixit "Ut sint in signa et tempora, dies et annos," id est in aliquo mutabili motu, cuius aliud prius, aliud posterius praeteriit, eo quod simul esse non possint'.

[75] E. Dümmler (ed.), MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini I, pp. 251–2, lines 7–8: 'Semper ubique vale, dic dic, dulcissime David, / David amor Flacci, semper ubique vale'.

[76] Ibid., lines 5–6: 'Lux, via, vita, salus cunctorum, Christus ametur, / Sit nobis Christus lux, via, vita, salus'.

[77] Dümmler (ed.), MGH Poetae I, pp. 243–4, lines 1–2, also ed. and trans. P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London: Duckworth, 1985), pp. 124–5: 'O mea cella, mihi habitatio dulcis, amata,/Semper in aeternum, o mea cella, vale'. On this famous poem, see P. Godman, 'Alcuin's Poetic Style and the Authenticity of "*O mea cella*"', *Studi Medievali* 20, 3rd series (1979), pp. 555–83, especially pp. 572–3 on the parallel between 'O Mea Cella' and Carmen 37.

[78] Godman (ed. and trans.), *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 124–5: 'Nos miseri, cur te fugitivum, mundus, amamus?/Tu fugis a nobis semper ubique ruens'.

But then, as though gathering up his resolve ('May you flee away, and let us always love Christ'), he concludes the elegy with a line that parallels his *Carmen 37*:

> Let us also praise and love him wholeheartedly,
> for He, the kindly one, is our glory, life, and salvation.[79]

These are statements of the will, but it is the will of one who has confronted the emotional range of human existence. Thus, while his kataphatic theological statements may not have been – as they were for Augustine and would be for Anselm – the result of searching, anxious introspection, they were not unemotional, and neither were they merely liturgical or transcendental. Certainly, Alcuin's *Versus de patribus regibus et sanctis Euboricensis ecclesiae* (Poem on the Bishops, Kings, and Saints of the Church of York) about the early history of Northumbria does contain an opening in keeping with the most liturgical and transcendent of prayers:

> Christ divine, strength and wisdom of the Father Almighty,
> life, salvation, creator, redeemer, and lover of mankind . . .[80]

By the end of the poem, however, Alcuin has confronted the worst that life can deliver – death, in this case that of a dear teacher, patron and friend, the archbishop Ælbert. The litany of possessives he inserts here shows its real force:

> Black was that day for us, but how radiant it was for him!
> That day left us fatherless and orphaned,
> bowed by tears, exile, and grim suffering,
> but him it restored to his homeland and father in Heaven,
> winning him freedom from tears, exile, and grim suffering.
> Christ was his love, his food and drink, his all; life, faith,
> understanding, hope, light, the way, glory, and virtue.[81]

Clearly the author is grappling with the transient nature of life: it is hard in these closing lines of the *Versus* to miss Alcuin's genuine grief at the loss of Ælbert.[82] But the vision which Alcuin offers here is the meaning of Christ in such a condition. Time and change bring loss and grief; but for the one who has made Christ 'his all', time and change bring gain and joy.

The litany of possessives finds its most natural home in elegiac poetry which confronts mutability and loss as the natural condition of human existence. Auden, it turns out, had a forerunner in Alcuin.[83] But the litany of possessives enabled the early

[79] Ibid., pp. 124–7: 'Tu fugiens fugias, Christum nos semper amemus. . . / Pectore quem pariter toto laudemus, amemus:/Nostra est ille pius gloria, vita, salus!'.

[80] P. Godman (ed. and trans.), *Alcuin: The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), lines 1–2, pp. 2–3: 'Christe deus, summi virtus sapientia patris,/vita, salus, hominum factor, renovator, amator . . .'.

[81] Ibid., lines 1576–82, pp. 128–9: 'O nobis, o nigra dies! O clara sed illi!/Nos sine patre dies orphanos ille reliquit/fletibus, exsilio duroque labore gravatos./Reddidit ast illum patriae patrique superno,/fletibus, exsilio duroque labore solutum/iam cui Christus amor, potus, cibus, omnia Christus,/vita, fides, sensus, spes, lux, via, gloria, virtus'.

[82] Godman, 'Alcuin and "*O Mea Cella*"', pp. 579–80.

[83] W. H. Auden's 'Stop All the Clocks', an elegy on the death of a friend: 'He was my North, my South, my East, my West, / My working week and my Sunday rest, / My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song . . .'.

medieval writer to go beyond the description of grief and sorrow, towards a description of life and hope. Sr Benedicta was correct in saying that the starting point for the Carolingians in their tradition of written prayers was the will rather than emotion: the Carolingians were not so much interested in describing their immediate feelings as describing whither they were bound. But the will for them was a deliberated response to the emotional realities of human existence – life and death, change and loss – and consequently expressed a reasoned determination to accept the totality of Christ. Surely the operative word in the litany of possessives is '*my*', to denote the monk's rational choice and strong sense of personal resolve. Amid the transience of life, this is prayer as wilful manifesto and self-persuasion, affirming a conscious decision to make Christ everything. Terse and unadorned, the prayers of the Carolingians were yet full of a sense of the 'inner movement of the monastic life', a sense apparent in this beautiful possessive pronominal phrase which the Carolingians so loved to use when talking to and about God.

8

St Boniface, Monk and Missioner

Henry Wansbrough, OSB

St Boniface has often been called[1] 'the greatest Englishman', as for example in a volume of essays published to commemorate the 13th centenary of a possible date of Boniface's birth, and frankly entitled, 'The Greatest Englishman'. Christopher Dawson similarly gives him that title,[2] suggesting that by his work in Germany he had more influence on the development of Europe than any other Englishman. He is often known as 'the apostle of Germany'. And yet a recent study presents him in a different light. R. A. Fletcher, in *The Barbarian Conversion* (1997, p. 208), claims that 'the letter [to Bishop Daniel of Winchester] shows what a difficult, prickly and tactless man Boniface was, . . . rigorist in his standards, who was not prepared to modify them by one jot or tittle in the face of circumstances'. The author continues that his biographer Willibald presents him 'as the single-handed restorer of Church life in Southern Germany. In other words, he rode roughshod over the sensibilities of congregations who revered Kilian or Rupert or Corbinian'. I shall endeavour to suggest that such a judgement, though not without some justification, is far too harsh.

One modification of the conventional picture of Boniface as the apostle of Germany must immediately be accepted: he was not the first to bring Christianity to the territories east of the Rhine. He exercised his authority there as the reformer of the Frankish realm. There he was initially a roving missioner, then successively bishop, archbishop and papal legate. Rather he was entrusted with the no less demanding and possibly more taxing task of reforming the church in those lands. Yes, he was by training and no doubt by temperament an exact man and a man of firm standards. But he was also capable of inspiring great loyalty and affection. I would suggest that, far from being harsh and domineering, the sort of person to 'ride roughshod' over others, he was gentle and somewhat hesitant.

The first puzzle is why he left the monastery and became a missionary. Willibald's *Life* tells us that he was elected abbot and refused the task. A cynic might remark that the phenomenon of the departure from the monastery of a distinguished figure at the *failure* to be elected abbot is not unknown even today. Is this nearer the truth? Barbara

[1] *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980).

[2] *The Making of Europe* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), p. 206.

Yorke[3] suggests that he was a nobleman and, after his early prominence, ambitious; he had no chance of becoming a bishop in England, so took off for the continent. Difficult as it is to establish such motivations, my estimation is that such ambition would not ring true to the man we know from Boniface's own letters, to the humanity and gentleness he shows in his private correspondence. He can, of course, be fierce and even strident in his denunciations as bishop, but his correspondence with the Anglo-Saxon women (mostly nuns) who shared in his mission is gentle and affectionate. To successive Popes and to his beloved Daniel of Winchester he shows his hesitancy and self-doubt. Rather it is appropriate to suggest that Boniface was and remained a true monk, motivated particularly by two monastic factors, obedience and the contemporary monastic ideal of pilgrimage.

The background of all Boniface's activities was the oath of loyalty he took to the Pope at the beginning of his ministry. 'He learnt obedience as a youth in the monastery, and he never forgot the lesson.'[4] This oath of loyalty dominated his horizon, and a scrupulous fear that he was being untrue to this promise was at the root of all his worries. Loyalty to Rome and to Roman order, already a characteristic of monastic life in England, was perhaps the most important and obvious feature of the Church life which he bequeathed to the Frankish and German Churches. I would suggest that this obedience was part of his monastic being, similar to the obedience of a monk to his abbot, as outlined in the *Regula Monachorum*, chapter 5. We do not know to what extent this particular Rule was already considered the foundation of monastic life, as it would be in the next century, after it was promulgated throughout the realms of Charlemagne by Alcuin; but obedience had long been a feature of all monastic life. Similarly, as we shall see, Boniface's concern with *lectio divina* is a trait which has always been central to monastic life.[5] The importance of monastic living is further confirmed by his personal relationships throughout his mission with monks and nuns, and especially the importance he attributed to the foundation of monasteries of monks on his territory. It is shown also in his care for the training of Sturm, the first superior of Fulda, whom he sent to Monte Cassino for training. Boniface was a monk through and through.

A second monastic feature was the ideal of pilgrimage, exile for Christ's sake. This was a basic idea in the minds of the Irish monks such as Kilian or Rupert who preceded Boniface in the mission field, and elsewhere in Europe. We find it also in the *Life* of Lioba, one of Boniface's female supporters, who regarded her life in Germany as a *peregrinatio* (c. 10 and 11). The idea of *peregrinatio* features largely in Willibald's *Life* of Boniface. Already in his childhood Boniface is said to have 'begun to shun the company of his parents and relations and to yearn for places of pilgrimage rather than those of his paternal inheritance' (c. 4). At the end of his life he 'was killed

[3] 'The Insular background to Boniface's Continental Career', in Franz J. Felten, Jörg Jarmut und Lutz E. Von Padburg (eds.), *Bonifatius Leben und Nachwirken* (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 2007), p. 32.

[4] Thomas F. X. Noble, 'Boniface and the Roman Church', in *Bonifatius Leben und Nachwirken* (*op. cit*.), p. 338.

[5] For an outstanding presentation of these two features, obedience and *lectio divina*, in ancient monastic life see the two articles by Sister Lisa Cremaschi in the *Bulletin* of the Alliance for International Monasticism, nos. 102 (2011) and 103 (2012).

in the fortieth year of his pilgrimage' (c. 8). Boniface himself also, in his letters to friends, makes frequent allusion to the notion. Writing to Eadberg, he calls himself *exsul Germanicus* (Letter 30), and in another letter 'the course of our pilgrimage is constricted by a variety of storms' with detailed allusion to the storms and various hardships undergone by Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 7.5; 11.24ff.; Letter 65). He uses the same imagery to his old friend Bishop Daniel of Winchester and to Herefrid (Letters 63 and 74). Pilgrimage for Christ is clearly part of his monastic ideal, rather than episcopal preferment.

The most salient characteristic of his mission was the difficulty he faced from the situation in which he found himself, not only from the survivals of paganism in the half-Christian areas on the borders of his territories, but more especially from those whom he could have expected to be his helpers in his Christian mission. These difficulties he faced with perseverance and with an endearing self-doubt. Far from being harsh and domineering, again and again he shows in his letters how gentle, even scrupulous, his conscience is. He is constantly worried that he is compromising too much with the dissolute bishops and clergy around him, and is almost desperately determined to fulfil his promise of loyalty to the Pope. Richard Fletcher regards him as a 'rigorist' who was not prepared to compromise. He was certainly meticulous in his observance, and writes to successive Popes with questions of detailed observance which to a modern eye would hardly seem worthy of papal attention. One illustration of this may be given. Boniface writes to Pope Zachary to ask after how long a time bacon fat may be eaten, a question on which an archbishop and papal legate might be thought able to make his own decision. However, the Pope takes the question seriously enough: 'we advise that it be not eaten until it has been smoked or cooked over a fire. If, however, one prefers to eat it raw, this should not be done until after Easter' (Letter 71, p. 162). Estimates of the relative importance of such matters may vary from age to age!

Curriculum vitae

The outline of Boniface's life is simply told with the help of his own letters and the biography of Willibald,[6] written by another English missionary in the Rhineland within a dozen years after Boniface's death. Willibald's *Life* is, of course, couched in the conventional Christian hagiographical mode, even to the extent of a little preface reminiscent of the preface to St Luke's Gospel, about the diligent research which has preceded the writing, not to mention clear allusions to the life of St Benedict in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great. It is more valuable as a guide to Boniface's movements and activities than it is to his character and motivation.

Being determined (from the age of four) to become a monk, Vynfreth – for that was his original name – entered the monastery of Examchester in Devon while still a boy, with the reluctant consent of his parents. There is no reason to doubt Willibald's account of his early enthusiasm for learning and for the scriptures. The lack of suitable

[6] *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany,* trans. and ed. by C. H. Talbot (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954).

teaching led him to move to the monastery of Nursling, then ruled by the learnt Abbot Winbert.[7] His early promise is confirmed by his choice by Winbert and other abbots with the agreement of the king of Wessex as delegate to report to the Archbishop of Canterbury on a regional council held to settle some unknown crisis.

Chronological outline

As a preliminary it will help to give here a short outline of Vynfreth's missionary career, based on Willibald's life and confirmed at various stages by Boniface's own letters, which give a personal and vivid picture of Vynfreth's relationships, his efforts and his worries. This career may be divided into three phases:

1 Beginnings

716. He spent a year and a half helping another Anglo-Saxon missionary in the Netherlands. Willibrord was evangelizing in Frisia, which was dominated by the pagan chieftain Rathbod. Rathbod rejected Christianity, no doubt as being the religion of his threatening neighbours, the Franks, allowing it only limited access. Nevertheless Boniface returned twice more to his first field of mission, the second and final time resulting in his martyrdom.

719. Boniface went to Rome and received a commission from Pope Gregory II to preach Christianity to the peoples East of the Rhine. This may well have been the Pope's response to Theodo of Bavaria, who came to Rome in 716 to ask for help (*Liber Pontificalis*, vol. 1, p. 398). Vynfreth spent a short time there, attempting to reform a fairly corrupt Christianity, and then, hearing that Rathbod had been defeated and killed, rejoined Willibrord. Was he there deserting his papal mission or temporarily perfecting his skills, learning from the master? In any case, when Willibrord invited him to remain more or less permanently by becoming a *chorepiscopus*,[8] he took fright and returned to the mission-field to which the Pope had sent him, beginning to preach in Hesse. Loyalty to a succession of Popes was to be the backbone of all Boniface's mission. From the renewal of Christianity in England with the arrival at Canterbury of Augustine, sent by Gregory the Great, the link of the English Church to Rome had been a particular feature. It was confirmed by the Synod of Whitby, and strengthened by the constant journeying backwards and forwards (with books, relics, craftsmen and musicians) to Rome which so marked the monastic Church in northern England. Perhaps the most significant feature of Boniface's activity was the imposition of the Roman pattern of Christianity on the territories to which he was papal Legate. It was this eagerness to conform to the Roman pattern that led him to send Sturm, who was

[7] The guess has been made that Vynfreth and Winbert were related, since they share the first syllable of their name (B. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* [Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995], pp. 184–5).

[8] This Greek word was the title given to assistant bishops, 'country bishop', derived from the Greek (chora = country, region) at a time when bishoprics were normally attached to significant cities.

to be the first Abbot of Fulda, with two companions to be trained as monks in Rome and at Monte Cassino.

2 Boniface the bishop, archbishop and papal legate

722/3. Presumably because of his success in Hesse, he was summoned to Rome and consecrated bishop, a roving bishop of no fixed see. He received the Episcopal name 'Boniface' and made promises of loyalty to the Pope which would ever afterwards be the foundation of his missionary activity.[9] His invariable use of this new name, the name of an obscure Roman martyr,[10] given to him on the day of his Episcopal ordination, which coincided with the martyr's feast-day, underlines his continual loyalty to Rome. His correspondence with successive Popes was frequent and detailed, sometimes fiery but always loyal.

732. After a further ten years of mission Boniface was appointed archbishop (still with no fixed see) and given its symbol of authority, the pallium.

738. He made another visit to Rome, after which he was sent as papal Legate to Bavaria, where he founded four bishoprics, Salzburg, Passau, Regensburg and Freising.

3 The final stage

741. On the death of Charles Martel the situation changed somewhat. Although Martel had supported Boniface to the extent of giving him letters of recommendation, the two sons who succeeded him seem to have increased their support, which enabled Boniface to set about a reform of the Frankish Church and its bishops who had long irked Boniface by the quality of their Christianity. He founded three further bishoprics (Würzburg, Buraburg and Erfurt). Much more importantly, he at last felt able to call Councils which set up a firm diocesan structure. He also set about founding further monasteries (including Fulda) as fruitful centres of Christian influence.

744. At last Boniface accepted a fixed see, and became archbishop of Mainz. There he remained for ten years, finally resigning in 754 (and consecrating his pupil Lull as successor), and returning to Frisia, where he was martyred by marauding pirates.

Vynfreth, scholar and grammarian

More significant for our investigation into Boniface's personality is his authorship at an early stage of an *Ars Grammatica* and an *Ars Metrica.*[11] These show that he was by

[9] This wholehearted oath of obedience, Letter 8 (p. 41), must be taken in full: 'I will show in all things a perfect loyalty to you [the successor of Peter] and to the welfare of your Church. . . . If I should be tempted into any action contrary to this my promise, may I be found guilty at the last judgment.'

[10] The Church of St Boniface in Rome may still be seen on the Aventine hill.

[11] *Bonifatii (Vynfreth) Ars Grammatica,* eds. George John Gebauer, Bengt Löfstedt (Corpus Christianorum, 133B, Turnhout: Brepols, 1980).

nature an exact man, as a grammarian needs to be, for they are models of patient and careful scholarship. The grammar is a detailed list of the parts of speech, cases, moods and tenses and their functions – not exciting reading! The two works form, however, an interesting witness to the extent of classical learning at the time, for there are plentiful quotations and examples from the works of Virgil, half a dozen references to Cicero and a couple to Sallust. It is striking that, despite knowledge of such Greek lyric metres as pyrrhics and coriambs (p. 109), there is no reference either to Greek poetry or to Latin lyric poetry. He is, however, perfectly capable of inserting (transcribed) Greek expressions into his Latin text, for example, *apo ton grammaton* and *cata psalmistam* (Letter 1). Furthermore, the fluent and even chatty discussion of the Greek lyric metres in the text (e.g. p. 83) gives the impression that Boniface (or Vynfreth, as he still was) was familiar with the actual works to which he refers, rather than merely quoting predecessors.

An amusing example of his skill with words occurs in the poem dedicated to his sister on the Christian virtues.[12] This is composed in classical hexameters. Each of the virtues announces itself and the advantages it brings to the Christian: *Fides Catholica*, *spes fatur*, *justitia dixit*, *veritas ait*, *misericordia ait*, *humilitas cristiana fatetur*, etc. (the Catholic faith, hope says . . ., justice speaks . . ., truth proclaims . . ., mercy proclaims . . ., Christian humility admits . . .). The name of each of these virtues is spelt out by the initial letters of the lines. The imagery combines Christian and pagan elements, in a way which the missionary Boniface might well later have found dangerously syncretistic! Vynfreth has no hesitation in making justice say, 'Fiery Jupiter is said to be my father', and those who spurn justice will suffer the 'fiery Tartara of King Pluto'. It is even tempting to see an allusion to Cicero's doggerel boast 'O fortunatam natam me consule Romam' in mercy's proclamation, 'O genus est superum felix me virgine nacta'. The text is full of delicate allusions to classical literature, especially Virgil, but also occasionally Ovid, as well as biblical allusions.

The most staggering illustration of his skill and meticulous learning is a full page of word-puzzle included in the *Ars Grammatica* as a dedication. This consists of 38 lines of alternating hexameters and pentameters of which the first and last letters form the acrostic dedication: *Vynfreth priscorum Duddo congesserat artem / viribus ille iugis iuvavit in arte magistrum* (Wynfreth wrought the art of the ancients for Duddo; with due skill he delighted the master by his art), which itself forms two lines of hexameters. Incredibly, the same dedication is read in a diamond or lozenge shape from top to bottom and from one side of the page to the other. As if that were not enough, the centre of the page forms a cross on the 'C' of 'Jesus Cristus'. This must surely rank as one of the masterpieces of that medieval equivalent of the crossword puzzle, the *carmen figuratum* associated with the name of Optatianus Porfyrius.[13] Attributed to

[12] Migne, *PL* 89, col. 887–892, and *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol 133B, ed. Fr Glorie, pp. 278–342.

[13] Cf. 'The Carmina of Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius and the Creative Process', in Carl Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History, vol. 12* (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2005), pp. 447–66. See also Dag Norberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), pp. 49–50. Cf. also Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 145.

Boniface is also one of the medieval systems of cryptography, the substitution of dots for vowels.[14]

Willibald's claim (c. 2) that Boniface's fame as a teacher spread far and wide among monasteries both of men and of women comes as no surprise, though Willibald insists that he was known primarily as a teacher of scripture rather than of literature. The claim is backed up by an affectionate letter from Lioba, a former pupil, to Boniface, already a missionary bishop ('bearing the insignia of the highest office'). She appends to her letter a little quatrain of her own, adding, 'I beg you also to be so kind as to correct the unskilled style of this letter and to send me, by way of example, a few kind words which I greatly long to hear'.[15] The letters attest not only his skill as a teacher, but also the lasting affection which he inspired in his students. If one may assume that they wrote in the style which they learnt from him, expecting that it would please him, they show either that Boniface had two sides to his character or that he later developed considerably, for their style is affected, flowery and artificial. One of the most gushing is from Abbess Eadburga, who writes:

> I am deprived of your bodily presence, yet I ever clasp your neck in a sisterly embrace. . . . More than the storm-tossed sailor longs for the harbour, more than the thirsty fields desire rain, or the anxious mother watches by the shore for her son, do I long for the sight of you.[16]

No less affectionate, and hardly less flowery, are the letters from Bugga:

> As when the whirlpools of the foaming sea draw in and out the mountainous waves dashing upon the rocks, when the force of the wind and the violence of the storm drive through a monstrous channel, the keels of the ships are upturned and masts are shattered – even so the frail vessels of our souls are shaken by the mighty engines of our miseries.[17]
>
> No change of earthly conditions can turn me away from the sheltering care of your affection. The power of love grows warm within me as I perceive that through the support of your prayers I have reached the haven of a certain peace.[18]

Vynfreth can also produce this artificial, pompous and whimsical style, derived from Aldhelm of Malemesbury. It can be seen in an early letter to 'his dearest companion and friend Nithard', describing 'all the wretched gold-diggers described in scripture

[14] The number of dots corresponds to the number of the vowel (so according to one method 1 = a, 2 = e, 3 = i, 4 = o, 5 = u). By another method the words *versus Bonifacii* read *v . . . rs . . . s b . . . n.f.c.* (Wilhelm Levison, *op. cit.,* p. 291). St Bede mentions a children's game played by raising fingers to the number of the intended letters of the alphabet (*PL* 90, col. 208). Thus '*Caute*!' ('Look out!) would be 3–1–21–20–5.

[15] *The Letters of Saint Boniface,* translated with an introduction by Ephraim Emerton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), Letter 21, pp. 59–60. References to Boniface's Letters are normally given according to the translation and edition of Ephraim Emerton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940). The letters are numbered according to this edition, not according to the fuller Latin edition by Michael Tangl (MGH: Berlin, 1916) on which Emerton's shorter edition is based.

[16] Letter 5, pp. 34–5.

[17] Letter 6, p. 36.

[18] Letter 7, p. 40.

as people condemned to keep nocturnal vigils, casting their nets like spiders' fragile webs, only to draw them in empty or catching no more than a little wind and dust'. He charmingly ends the letter with 28 lines of rhyming verse, including a seven-line acrostic poem, each line beginning with a successive letter of Nithard's name, again affectionately showing his skill in this art form (pp. 23–4). But in the letters he later wrote to his friends in England, no less than in his official letters to Pope, archbishop and king, he has shed such affectations, and is direct, concise and purposeful.

Problems facing Boniface

1 Missioners in a foreign land

The first problem facing Boniface was that he and his companions were missioners in a foreign land. Willibrord in Frisia and Boniface in Frankish territories were part of, or perhaps successors to, the great movement stemming from the Celtic monasticism of exiles for Christ. It would, of course, be crassly anachronistic to read back modern nationalism to this period of European history, but there was enough feeling of racial solidarity for Boniface to write back home to 'all God-fearing catholics of the stock and race of the Angles' (Letter 36, pp. 74–5), asking for their prayers and support when he sets about his mission to the Saxons of Germany, putting in the mouth of the prospective converts the biblical quotation, 'We are of one blood and one bone with you'. This is the one occasion in the letters when he uses his original name, 'Boniface, named also Vynfreth, born of the same race,' to stress his own relationship with both the prospective converts and the recipients of the letter. This struck a chord with Bishop Torthelm of Leicester, who writes of his joy that people of *gens nostra* should be drawn into the true faith (Letter 37, p. 75). Boniface's letters leave no doubt that eyes were frequently turned back home. At the end of his life he still feels that he and almost all his team are foreigners/pilgrims (*peregrini* – Letter 76, p. 169). Nevertheless, he feels authorized to interfere in the affairs of Mercia by writing a fierce letter of criticism to King Ethelbald (Letter 63, p. 124). He turns to Archbishop Egbert of York, not only asking for works of Bede (and offering some letters of Gregory in return), but also for advice about the letter to Ethelbald (Letter 69, p. 132) and again about whether to allow a sinful priest to continue his ministry (Letter 75, p. 167). He turns to Archbishop Nothelm of Canterbury asking for precedents about marriage cases, and asking for continuance of the close friendship he had with Nothelm's predecessor, Bertwald (Letter 24, p. 62). Towards the end of his life he has no hesitation in writing to Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury, blaming him for the number of English prostitutes to be found in Lombardy and Frankland on the path to Rome – 'it is a scandal and disgrace to your whole Church' (Letter 62, p. 140). Above all, the long, frequent and affectionate letters exchanged with Bishop Daniel of Winchester show his continuing close relationship with that senior figure ('my beloved master', Letter 51, p. 114) who had been his diocesan bishop before he set out on his mission, and from whom he still invites advice and accepts gentle criticism.

More important for the actual mission was Boniface's reliance on large numbers of friends and followers from England, particularly Kent and Wessex, who joined him in his missionary endeavours. There were few towns in Germany of sufficient gravity to support an Episcopal see – this is a continual worry in his correspondence with Rome about the appointment of bishops (e.g. Letter 41, p. 83) – and an essential part of his missionary strategy was the fostering of Christian centres by implanting monasteries both of monks and of nuns, such as Tauberbischofsheim (nuns) and Fritzlar and Fulda (monks), and also Amoeneberg and Ordruf. The care he took over these is evidenced by the detailed letters he sent about their organization and personnel (Letters 30 and 31, pp. 67–8, about Fritzlar; Letters 70, 71, 73, p. 158, 160, 165 about Fulda; Letter 79 to Lioba about Tauberbischofsheim, p. 172). In another touching letter Wigbert writes home to his old community at Glastonbury, mentioning his gratitude to Boniface who, 'when he heard of our arrival had the kindness to come a long way to meet us and gave us a gracious welcome' (Letter 82, p. 174).

2 Survivals of paganism

How much sympathy did Boniface and his band of English missioners have for the Christianity they met? Boniface's team were, of course, not the first missioners to German lands. Boniface's first missions to the peoples East of the Rhine were to Hesse and Thuringia and later to Bavaria. There he found a Christianity which had been implanted by such great figures as Kilian at Würzburg half a century earlier, and Corbinian at Freising soon afterwards. The battle there was, however, far from won; there was still plenty of paganism mixed in with the Christian faith and practice.[19] Boniface had no alternative to waging an ongoing war against paganism and syncretism. Probably the best-known of all incidents in Boniface's career is his miraculous smashing of the great Oak of Jupiter at Geismar in Thuringia (Willibald's *Life*, c. 8). Willibald goes on to detail a plethora of pagan practices which continued: sacrifice to trees and springs, divination, auguries, etc.[20] In 722 Pope Gregory II commends Boniface to the Christians of Germany, mentioning that certain peoples 'under the form of Christian faith are still in slavery to the worship of idols' (Letter 9, p. 42). A couple of years later he tells the Thuringians not to worship idols or sacrifice to them (Letter 17, p. 53). A dozen years later Pope Gregory III, in supporting Boniface's commission to the nobles and people of Thuringia and Hesse, writes urgently that they are to 'reject absolutely all divination, fortune-telling, sacrifices to the dead, prophesies in groves or by fountains, amulets, sorcery and sacrilegious practices which used to go on in your country' (Letter 33, p. 70), and to the bishops of Bavaria and Alemannia to reject and prohibit 'the practices and doctrines of the heathen' (Letter 31, p. 71). The famous list of superstitious survivals, *Indiculus Superstitionum et Paganiarum*, has been argued to

[19] See Bernadette Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005).

[20] *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries to Germany,* trans. and ed. C. H. Talbot (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954), p. 45.

have originated at Fulda at the end of the century,[21] a strong warning to missioners that such practices still survived in abundance.

Pope Gregory's admonitions might be discounted as generalizations, but there are more specific charges. Some Christians had been selling slaves to the heathen for human sacrifice, and a priest had been baptizing who also sacrificed to Jupiter (Letter 20, pp. 58–9). There was enough sacrificing to idols to make it a puzzle for Christians whether they could eat meat so offered (Letter 18, p. 54). This situation seems to have made an ongoing difficulty, not altogether surprising in border territory, for as late as 748 Pope Zachary quotes Boniface's letter denouncing 'so-called priests, more in number than the true catholics, heretical pretenders under the name of bishops or priests, but never ordained by catholic bishops, . . . protected by the people against the bishops. They carry on their false ministry not in a catholic church but in the open country in the huts of farm labourers, where their ignorance and stupid folly can be hidden from the bishops' (Letter 64, p. 144). The repeated use of 'bishops' in the plural shows that the difficulty was not confined to one diocese. One is reminded of the 'bishops' and 'prophets' of traditional African cults, who are to be found preaching to their congregations on a Sunday under any tree in Zimbabwe. Their rites are irregular: 'Nor do they fortify them with the sign of the Cross which should precede baptism', just as in Zimbabwe I one day came across a baptismal ceremony which began with detergent spread upon the head of the neophyte.

The most fascinating case is that of the two priests Aldebert and Clemens, of whose trial before the Roman Synod we have a full transcript (Letter 47, pp. 98–107). According to the Roman custom still prevalent in the twenty-first century, the accused themselves were not present, so that we have only one side of the evidence. In his letter to the Synod Boniface grants that 'a multitude of simple folk said that he [Aldebert] was a man of apostolic sanctity and had worked many signs and wonders'. Boniface accuses Aldebert of setting up oratories to himself, of distributing his hair and fingernails as relics. He also claimed that a letter of reference for himself had fallen from heaven. Apart from this personal cult, Aldebert was accused of consecrating sanctuaries in the fields or at springs, which could be seen as an attempt to Christianize pagan sanctuaries. The same dubious syncretism could account for his advocacy of a strange set of angels, Uriel, Raguel, Tubuel, Michael, Adinus, Tubuas, Sabaoc and Simiel: were these Hebrew-sounding extra names attempts to bring pagan deities under the aegis of Christianity? More clearly 'heretical' was his cavalier attitude to the forgiveness of sins, for he was accused of saying, 'I know all your hidden sins. There is no need of confession; your past sins are forgiven you. Go back to your homes absolved in peace and safety'. His fellow-accused, Clemens, similarly proclaimed universal forgiveness: 'Christ, descending to the lower world, set free all who were imprisoned there, believers and unbelievers, even those who praised and the worshippers of idols' (p. 102). They were both stripped of their functions by the Synod of Roman clergy, but it would be

[21] Alain Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne', in H. Hasquin (ed.), *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984).

interesting to hear their side of the story, though the charges cannot all be construed as misguided attempts at inculturation!

In this state of instruction it is not, perhaps, surprising that another strange idea should have arisen. In 748 Pope Zachary replies to Boniface about a certain Virgilius ('we do not know whether he should be called priest', Letter 64, p. 147), who believed that there was another world below this earth and other men, and also a sun and a moon. He too was to be sent to Rome by Duke Odilo of Bavaria so that the Pope might thoroughly investigate the case.

Theological speculations were one thing, but property rights quite another. The most difficult of all problems raised by the grafting of Christianity onto this pagan society was the marriage problem. Intermarriage of close family members was an important factor among these peoples in keeping property within the family, and the Hebraeo-Christian prohibition of marriage within certain degrees of kinship was a constant worry. Augustine of Canterbury had raised it with Pope Gregory the Great on his arrival in Britain (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* 1.27). The same problem had already arisen twice in aristocratic circles in Bavaria. St Kilian was killed by Geilana for denouncing her marriage to Duke Gozbert, brother of her deceased husband. St Corbinian was expelled from Freising for denouncing Duke Grimoald's marriage to his brother's widow. Similarly, in Frisia, the powerful Duke Rathbod had stepped back from the baptismal font when he heard that baptism would cut him off from family ties with his pagan ancestors. Boniface writes repeatedly to fellow-bishops in an attempt to establish the permissible degrees of affinity (a reply from Pope Gregory II, Letter 18, p. 53; from Pope Gregory III, Letter 20, p. 58; a query to the Scots Bishop Pehthelm, Letter 23, p. 61; a worried letter to Archbishop Nothelm of Canterbury, Letter 24, pp. 62–3; to Duddo, Letter 25, p. 64). This was no mere matter of eugenics or of liturgy[22] but a vital question of economic and political stability.

3 Boniface and the Frankish bishops

The same situation of family ownership of property gave rise to the greatest problem of all those faced by Boniface, namely unsatisfactory bishops. It is quite clear from all his dealing with the Merovingian court that the bishops were primarily landed gentry and only secondarily spiritual figures. They were barons for whom spiritual matters and the shepherding of their flock were of secondary importance. In his initial oath of loyalty to the Pope at his episcopal consecration he had sworn, 'if I shall discover any bishops who are opponents of the ancient institutions of the holy Fathers, I will have no part or lot with them, but so far as I can I will restrain them' (Letter 8, p. 41). Coming from England, where the local monarchies were traditionally far stronger than the Merovingian 'Mayors of the Palace' had been (at least until recently), he may not have fully realized that in many cases bishoprics had become family properties. John-Henry Clay describes the situation: 'the long-established Frankish model where bishoprics

[22] Contrast the problem about which Pope Zachary writes to Boniface: a priest, ignorant of Latin, who had been baptizing 'in nomine patri**a** et fili**a** et spiritus sancti'. Is it a valid baptism? Here the grammarian in Boniface seems to have come to the fore! (Letter 54, p. 122).

could be granted, inherited or appropriated like any other piece on the political chess board, and where bishops, being quite prepared to swap mitre and stole for sword and shield as well as to marry, were scarcely distinguishable from any other Frankish warrior noble'.[23] There was no equivalent to this in Boniface's home country.

This juncture of ecclesiastical and secular authority was to become one of his greatest worries. Within two years he needed to complain to the Pope about Bishop Gerold of Mainz, who had formerly been inactive and now had begun to interfere with Boniface's efforts. Gregory II gently promises to write to Charles Martel (the Mayor of the Palace, so a secular ruler) to keep him in check (Letter 16, p. 51). Years later,[24] writing to his old friend Bishop Daniel, Boniface still pours out his heart and asks what he should do (Letter 51, p. 115); the need to associate with these worldly potentates was clearly troubling his conscience. After a list of various deviations among the higher clergy he laments,

> Needing the patronage of the Frankish court, we cannot separate ourselves from contact with such persons as the canonical rule requires – excepting only that in the holy ceremony of the Mass we do not communicate with them in the sacred mystery of the body and blood of the Lord. We avoid taking counsel with them or obtaining their consent, for to such men our labours with the heathen and with the mixed multitude of common people seem wholly foreign.

Daniel replies, gently reminding Boniface of the parable of the wheat and the tares, and quoting Augustine's reminder that clean and unclean animals entered Noah's Ark through the same door (Letter 52, p. 119).

Boniface writes in the same vein to Abbess Eadburga of Thanet, 'On every hand is struggle and grief, fighting without and fear within. Worst of all, the treachery of false brethren surpasses the malice of unbelieving pagans' (Letter 53, p. 122). As late as 751 he writes to Pope Zachary himself, reminding him of his oath to Pope Gregory II, who

> bound me by an oath to be the aid and supporter of regular and right-minded bishops and priests in word and deed, and this, by divine grace, I have tried to do. False priests, however, hypocrites, misleading the people, I would either restore to the way of salvation or reject and refrain from communion with them. This I have in part accomplished but in part have not been able to maintain and carry through. I have not been able absolutely to keep apart from them when I have gone to the Frankish court on business of the Church and have found there persons of whom I could not approve. (Letter 70, p. 158)

[23] *In the Shadow of Death, Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–754* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), p. 354.

[24] How much later? Tangl (p. 128, footnote 1) tentatively dates this exchange of letters to 742–46. However, there is no mention of the reforming Synods of 742 and 743, and Boniface mentions difficulties of support from the Frankish court (p. 115), whereas from 741 Karlomann was giving him full support. The correspondence would fit better earlier, before the reforming Synods, at any time (as Tangl insists) after 732.

Zachary replies sympathetically,

> if, to secure the favour of the princes and people of the Franks on behalf of the needs of the Churches of God, you could not escape from personal contact with them, while at the same time your soul was not infected by their opinions or by any consent to communion with them, then the fact of your dealing with them without consenting to their iniquities is no reproach to you in the sight of God. (Letter 71, p. 160)

Later in the same letter, after giving instructions on a variety of topics (e.g. whether beavers, hares and wild horses may be eaten) he focuses on a couple of Episcopal matters: 'As for Milo [Bishop of Trier and Rheims for 40 years from 723] and his like,[25] who are doing great injury to the Church of God, preach in season and out of season, according to the word of the Apostle, that they cease from their evil ways.' He also considers the case (which Boniface had no doubt put to him) of an excommunicated bishop who pays no attention to apostolic authority (pp. 162–3).

The ancient but important article of Eugen Ewig 'Milo et eiusmodi similes'[26] has lost none of its relevance. Ewig considers that 'the personal tragedy of the apostle lay in his status as a *peregrinus*'. He could never really come to terms with the constitution of the Frankish bishops, who were aristocrats involved in power struggles, more like secular rulers or barons in their own right. Milo's father had also been Bishop of Trier, as had his maternal uncle Basinus. Later in the century a Bishop of Speyer and Abbot of Weissenburg has the same name, Basin. No doubt he belonged to the same family. The family owned extensive territories in the area and ruled several abbeys, Milo's father being also Bishop of Rheims and Laon. It is not clear that Milo ever received more than diaconal ordination, and may have left the specifically sacred duties of a bishop to others, for other bishops are known at Trier at the time, and Milo is hostilely described as 'a cleric only by his tonsure, knowing nothing of the ecclesiastical order'. He died in a wild boar hunt (Ewig, pp. 419–20).

This dynastic hold on the bishopric was not unique. Hugo, a nephew of Charles Martell, held the dioceses of Rouen, Bayeux and Paris, as well as the abbacies of St Wandrille and Jumièges. In Le Mans the two sons of Count Rotgar successively held the office of bishop, despite the fact that the first, Charievius, remained a layman. After a wide review of the evidence Ewig concludes, 'It would be possible to qualify the ecclesiastical position in the Frankish-Aquitainian frontier-zone between the Rhone and the lower Loire as aristocratic republics with bishops at their head' (Ewig, p. 434). Such a class of bishop would not accord with the expectations of such a man as Boniface. There was nothing corresponding to it in the England from which he came, and the situation was indeed a far cry from the monastic bishops of the North East. He would have seen it as an obvious consequence of the way in which the bishops were so often married with children – a practice against which he constantly inveighs. Perhaps the fiercest passage in the letters is to Pope Zachary, when Boniface charges deacons

[25] To Zachary he mentions also Bishop Gewilib of Mainz, 'another false teacher who formerly held unlawfully the office of bishop' (Letter 48, p. 110).

[26] In *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien : gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973)*.

with having four or five concubines in their beds, continuing in the same vices when they become priests. Furthermore, 'certain bishops are to be found among them, who, although they deny that they are fornicators or adulterers, are drunkards and shiftless men, given to hunting and to fighting in the army like soldiers and by their own hands shedding blood' (Letter 40, p. 80).

It was only at the death of Charles Martel and the accession of the more sympathetic brothers Karlomann and Pippin that Boniface set his seal on the organization of the Church in Frankish territories and Bavaria, consecrating three of his collaborators as bishops in Buraburg, Erfurt and Würzburg. Externally, the more energetic rule of Karlomann and Pippin brought its own difficulties: now for the first time we hear of violence from the pagans. In 743 Karlomann made a thrust into Saxony right up to Heeseburg. It may have been in retaliation for this expansionism that reports of several barbarian invasions follow: in 745 Pope Zachary replies to Boniface's report about *incursio gentium* with the meagre comfort that even Rome has survived far worse (Letter 60, p. 108). A similar threat was looming in 751, to the extent that Boniface asked Zachary whether it was legitimate to flee *persecutionem paganorum* (Letter 71, p. 163). The following year, in his greeting to the new Pope Stephen II, Boniface reports that more than 30 churches have been pillaged and burnt (Letter 88, p. 181). That the situation did not much improve is shown by Boniface's letter, written shortly before his death, to Abbot Fulrad, seeking support for priests 'living near the border of the heathen', who 'lead a very meagre existence. They can get enough to eat, but cannot procure clothing without help and protection from elsewhere' (Letter 76, p. 170).

Internally, however, the new regime gave Boniface an opportunity to move forward. At last he was able to introduce again the practice of Synods, which had lapsed for 80 years. By these Synods of 742 and 743 he set up a regular system of inspection:[27] each year every priest should submit an account of his ministry, the bishop should make the round of the diocese annually, and the metropolitan should investigate the conduct of the bishop, who would then discuss the result with his assembled priests (cf. the Decrees published by Karlomann, Letter 44, pp. 91–4). The 'servants of God' (presumably the bishops) shall not hunt or go about in the woods with dogs or keep hawks or falcons (Letter 62, p. 137) – perhaps an indirect reference to Milo's death. The decrees were not immediately wholly successful, for Bishop Hildegar of Köln was killed by the Saxons at Iburg in 753 during a campaign against the Saxons led by Pippin; obviously he, at any rate, remained a warrior-bishop. But it is clear from the dispute between Hildegar and Boniface over the see of Utrecht (Letter 89, pp. 181–3) that Hildegar had his differences with Boniface! In his appeal to the Pope for a decision, Boniface does not soil his pen by mentioning Hildegar by name, and goes so far as to imply that if Hildegar wins the see of Utrecht it will no longer be under papal authority.

In a letter to Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury detailing the process of the synods, Boniface touchingly rounds off his account by mentioning his awareness that the teacher must set an example of holy life himself, humorously comparing himself to a barking dog that sees thieves and robbers break in and plunder his master's house,

[27] Details of the organization are given in the admirable account by Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 78–83.

but because he has no one to help him can only whine and complain (Letter 62, pp. 138–9). Far from being a dominating tyrant, Boniface is always prepared to be self-critical, as he is when dealing with the corrupt Merovingian court circles, and needs to be reassured by the Pope: he should not avoid conversation or table fellowship with them, but rather attempt to lead them back to the paths of righteousness by his companionship (Letter 18, p. 55). On the same subject dear old Bishop Daniel, who is now going blind, writes a long letter of reassurance, 'not as if you were ignorant of the ancient authorities, but because we were anxious not to disappoint you' (Letter 52, p. 121).

4 Boniface's denunciations

What then of his fierce denunciations? Boniface was not afraid of plain speaking, even to the Pope. Having listed the unacceptable behaviour of deacons, priests and bishops in his own territory, he continues with a carefully graded *crescendo* to criticize the Papacy itself. First he criticizes the Pope's predecessor, pointing out that the successor to himself designated by Gregory III is unsuitable because his brother is embroiled in a blood feud (Letter 40, p. 80). This would not be untypical of the baron/bishops of the Merovingian lands. Then Boniface goes on to mention a confusing report that he simply can't believe, that the Pope has given permission to 'a certain layman of high standing' to marry his uncle's widow (p. 81). Finally he incredulously relays the rumour spread by 'some of the ignorant common people' that at the New Year Festival in Rome there are pagan festivities in the very neighbourhood of St Peter's – just the sort of pagan practices which he is trying to stamp out on his mission! 'All these things, seen by evil-minded and ignorant people, are a cause of reproach to us and a hindrance to our preaching and teaching' (p. 82). The ironical refusal to believe the criticisms, and the diplomatic language, are all the more delicious because on each of the three counts the Pope has infringed central thrusts of Boniface's pastoral strategy: his opposition to the corrupt bishops, his opposition to marriage within the forbidden degrees and his attempts to outlaw pagan customs. To these accusations Pope Zachary's answer is decidedly lame: 'All these practices were extirpated by a decree of our predecessor, and we have hastened to follow his example' (Letter 41, p. 87). When Zachary is on firmer ground he has no hesitation in saying so. Eighteen months later, when Boniface has sent two self-contradictory letters and – in the bargain – accused the Pope of simony, Zachary does not mince his words: 'Dearest brother, we pray your Holiness never in future to write anything of this sort, for we take it as a grievous insult to be charged with an offence which we especially detest' (Letter 46, p. 97).

After which exchange, it is striking that relationships between the Pope and his legate remained on an even keel! And this they did, for when Boniface himself is beginning to slow up with old age, the Popes urge him to continue with undimmed energy, both Gregory III in 739 (Letter 35, p. 73) and Zachary, who in 743 will not hear of Boniface planning for a successor (Letter 41, p. 85).

In his letters to England Boniface is no less outspoken. We have already mentioned his forthright reproach to Archbishop Cuthbert about prostitutes on the way to Rome (Letter 62, p. 140). The fiercest letter in the whole collection is addressed to King

Ethelbald of Mercia, the most powerful king in England at the time. With the support of seven other bishops Boniface thunderously denounces a whole series of practices, ranging from the king's own adulteries to sexual sins 'with holy nuns and virgins', followed by the infanticide of the resultant children, and finally the expropriation of church property (Letter 57, pp. 124–30). Boniface carefully sent the letter beforehand to Egbert, Archbishop of York, for his approval (Letter 59, p. 132), which he presumably obtained. Furthermore, the dire threats of eternal punishment may have had their effect, for it does seem that action was taken: at the Synod of Gumley in 749 ecclesiastical lands were freed from a number of financial burdens. It could well be said that interference in the affairs of the Kingdom of Mercia was not Boniface's business, but the abuses he castigates seem real enough. One wonders what the temporal relationship was between this letter and another, eirenic letter from Boniface to Ethelbald, asking help and protection for his messenger, Ceola, and accompanied by gifts including a hawk and two falcons. It ends with a slightly ominous warning: 'if any writings of ours shall come to your hand by another messenger, you will be pleased to give them your attention and your utmost care' (Letter 55, p. 123). Was Boniface preparing the king for his rebuke?

5 Personal friendships

An important factor in forming a picture of Boniface's personality and activity is of course consideration of his personal friendships. They show a warm affectionate and caring personality, who won not only the respect, but also the loyalty of many. Apart from the annoyance of the Pope at being accused of simony, there is never a hint from his correspondents of impatience or reproach.

Many of his letters, especially his unofficial letters, are accompanied by small gifts. To Bishop Pehthelm he sends a white-spotted garment and a coarse towel to dry the feet of the servants of God (Letter 23, p. 61). At the end of a long letter to the new Pope Zachary, congratulating him on his accession to the Papacy, he mentions some trifling gifts of a warm rug and 'a little silver and gold' (Letter 40, p. 82). To his old friend Bishop Daniel he sensibly sends 'a bath towel, not of pure silk but mixed with rough goats' hair to dry your feet' (Letter 51, p. 116), to the wicked King Ethelbald three hunting-birds and other weapons (Letter 55, p. 123), to the priest Herefrid 'a cloak and a towel for drying after washing the feet of the servants of God' (Letter 59, p. 133). To Abbot Huetbert of Wearmouth his request for a copy of works of St Bede is accompanied by a goats' hair coverlet (Letter 60, p. 134).[28] To Archbishop Egbert of York he sends two small casks of wine to make merry with the brethren (Letter 75, p. 169). Despite the lack of any modern parcel-post, such gracious gift-giving was reciprocated; it must have been an expected courtesy. The English nuns send Boniface books and money (Letters 7 and 22, p. 40, 61). Bishop Torthelm of Leicester accompanies his letter with 'a small gift' (Letter 37, p. 76). Lullus and friends send incense, pepper and

[28] The request seems to have been unsuccessful, since he writes again with a similar request to the Archbishop of York. In another case of non-delivery the Abbot of Wearmouth excused himself by saying that the winter had been so cold that they could not copy manuscripts.

cinnamon (Letter 39, p. 78). Archdeacon Theophylactus sends back Lullus from Rome with a gushing letter and 'a little gift of spices, cinnamon and thorax' (Letter 69, p. 157); Cardinal Benedict sends from Rome two towels and a little incense (Letter 74, p. 167). Such gentle gifts do not suggest an intolerant person.

Chief among his friendships must rank that with Bishop Daniel of Winchester. Early in his mission Daniel writes to him a long letter with gentle instructions about evangelizing the pagans: Boniface is not to argue with them and point out their errors; rather he should coax them into themselves seeing the limitations of their beliefs, 'so that they may be ashamed of their absurd ideas' (Letter 15, pp. 48–50). Many years later, when Daniel is suffering from blindness, Boniface pours out to him his worries about associating with the dissolute bishops of the court. Daniel still replies with the utmost gentleness and sympathy, ending his letter, 'Farewell, farewell, my hundredfold dearest friend' (Letters 51–52, pp. 114–21). The early letters from nuns of Kent and Wessex, like Lioba, are again proofs of his care and affection.[29] The same personal attraction will have played its part in the number of English monks[30] and nuns who joined him, as Willibald's *Life* tells us: 'From Britain an exceedingly large number of holy people came to his aid, among them readers, writers and learned men trained in the other arts' (c. 6).[31] Again and again, throughout the collection of letters, occur little glimpses of the affection in which he is held: a priest writing to Boniface to ask Boniface to be a second bishop (perhaps the equivalent of a spiritual director) to himself (Letter 27, p. 65), or the letter from Wigbert, expressing his delight that Boniface made a long journey to greet him on his arrival in the mission-field (Letter 82, p. 174). Equally impressive is the personal knowledge and care he shows in the appointment of monks in the various roles (not only prior but also cook and labourer) at the monastery of Fritzlar (Letter 30, p. 67). His care for Fulda is perhaps a special case, for that was to be his final resting place and perpetual memorial (Letters 70, 71, 73, p. 157, 160, 165).

Another attractive feature – and one which deserves special mention in a Festschrift for Sister Benedicta – is Boniface's continuing care for *lectio divina.* He writes twice asking for works of Bede, once to the Abbot of Wearmouth (Letter 60, p. 133) and again to Archbishop Egbert of York (Letter 75, p. 168). In old age he writes to his long-standing friend, Abbot Duddo, asking for commentaries on the letters of Paul, as he has commentaries only on Romans and First Corinthians (Letter 25, p. 64), and to Abbess Eadburga, asking for a display copy of the Epistles of Peter in gold letters (Letter 26, p. 64). Most touchingly, when his eyesight is failing, and he can no longer read small letters with abbreviations, he remembers a copy of 'the six prophets written in clear script' which his old teacher Abbot Winbert used to possess, and asks blind Bishop Daniel to send it (Letter 51, p. 116). In all the difficulties of his travelling apostolate, becoming increasingly weary with his advancing age and loss of eyesight, he remains a faithful monk, giving due place to his monastic priorities.

[29] Her *Life*, written in the mid-ninth century, is more hagiographical than historical, but probably provides a rough outline, see *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, trans. and ed. C. H. Talbot (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954).

[30] Such as Lullus, successor to Boniface as Archbishop of Mainz.

[31] 'The Bonifacian mission and female religious in Wessex' by Barbara Yorke, *www.ulpgc.es/hege/almacen/download/30/30078/sanbonifacio.pdf*.

Conclusion

It is difficult to accept that any man who exerted such personal magnetism and was rewarded with such devoted loyalty can have been as 'difficult, prickly, tactless and rigorist' as Richard Fletcher suggests. It was not long after Boniface's martyrdom that Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury (whom Boniface had so vigorously rebuked) was writing to his successor at Mainz, 'We give thanks that the English people were found worthy, foreigners as they are, to send out this gifted student of heavenly learning, this noble soldier of Christ, with many pupils well taught and trained for the salvation of many souls through the grace of Almighty God' (Letter 90, p. 184). He adds that his provincial Council has joined Boniface to Gregory and Augustine as special patron.

9

Turning the World Upside-Down: St Peter Damian's Theology of the Spiritual Life

Gordon Mursell

There is a paradox at the heart of Peter Damian's theology of the spiritual life, which is nowhere clearer than in his view of the world, and of the nature of human beings. On the one hand, he makes it clear that our existence in this world is transitory in the perspective of eternity: 'if we were to compare the immense space of time in which God existed before the world was, and that in which he will continue to exist after its end, with the tiny amount of time from the beginning of the world to its end, it would be less than if you were to throw a handful of water into the sea'.[1] And he accepts St Paul's sober view of human fallenness: all human beings have sinned, and Christ died for all. As a monk he persistently refers to himself as 'Peter the monk and sinner (*Petrus peccator monachus*)', even after being made bishop.[2] Yet, on the other hand, precisely in making this latter point he insists on the universal scope of Christ's redeeming work: 'the blood of Christ is the redemption of all the world (*sanguis Christi redemptio totius est mundi*)'.[3] Note his wording: Christ died for all the world, not just for the Church, or even for all humanity. And here is one aspect of the paradox: this transitory world, a world from which Damian counsels his audience to flee to the spiritual safety of the monastery (or, better still, the hermitage), is precisely the world for which Christ gave his life. This paradox is not new: it informs the understanding of 'the world' to be found in the Johannine writings in the New Testament: in them we find that, while

[1] Letter 92, vol. 3, p. 15 in Kurt Reindel (ed.), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit, IV), 4 vols, Munich, 1983–93. All references to the letters are to this edition. English translation (ET) by Owen J. Blum OFM, completed after his death by Irven M. Resnick: *The Letters of Peter Damian* (The Fathers of the Church: Mediaeval Continuation, Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press), 6 vols, 1989–2005. Where the English translation (ET) is not given, the translations are my own.

[2] '*Ego Petrus peccator monachus*', in a charter of 1060, in Pierucci and Polverari (eds.), *Carte di Fonte Avellana 1 (975–1139)*; (Thesaurus Ecclesiarum Italiae, IX:1) (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1972), p. 37; cf. ibid., p. 79, in a legal concession of 1070, ibid., pp. 83 and 87, in letters written between 1060 and 1071. See also Lucchesi, Giovanni, 'Per una vita di San Pier Damiani', in *San Pier Damiano nel IX centenario della morte (1072–1972)*, vol. 1 (Cesena: Centro Studi e Ricerche sulla Antica Provincia Ecclesiastica Ravennate, 1972), p. 147.

[3] Letter 180, vol. 4, p. 292; ET, vol.7, p. 295. See Rom. 3.9-20. All Bible references are to the NRSV unless otherwise stated.

Christ prays to the Father to deliver his disciples from the world and warns those disciples of the hostility the world will direct at them,[4] he also declares that 'God so loved *the world* (not "the people of God", or even "all humanity") that he gave his only Son . . . .God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that *the world* might be saved through him'; and Christ goes on to pray that his disciples may reproduce in their common life the mutual indwelling and love of the Father and the Son, 'so that *the world* may believe that you have sent me'.[5]

The world, then, in the sense of the created order,[6] is (for Peter Damian as for the evangelist John) both transitory and hostile – and yet Christ died for it, not just for a small number of the elect or even just for all humanity.[7] And the paradox is further heightened by Damian's understanding of the human person: each fragile, sinful individual is at the same time a microcosm of 'the world', in that each person contains the four fundamental elements believed to be constitutive of the created order – and he takes that classical Greek view of the human person further in maintaining that each Christian is a 'little church' (*quasi quaedam minor ecclesia*), since each is capable of receiving all the sacraments by which Christ's redemptive work become efficacious in individual human lives.[8] Elsewhere he writes of the human person as 'a lesser world (*minori mundo*)', reproducing within his or her interior life the conflict that Damian believes to exist at the heart of the created order.[9]

There is nothing particularly new in this approach – not that novelty, especially in doctrine, was remotely a virtue for Damian.[10] His view of 'the world' draws not only on Johannine theology, but also on St Paul's conception of it as the arena of conflict between life lived 'according to the flesh' and that lived 'according to the Spirit'.[11] What is striking is the thoroughgoing way in which this paradox informs his theology of the spiritual life. It also, of course, informs his own life and character: the constant tension between the demands of 'the world' (especially after he was made cardinal

[4] See for example Jn 16.33, 17.9 and 17.14.

[5] Jn 3.16, 17.21; italics added.

[6] NB that the Latin *mundus* translates the Greek *κόσμος*, lit. 'order', hence 'the world' or 'the universe'.

[7] Cf. the remark of M.-D. Chenu OP, in *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century*, ET by Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (from Chenu's *La théologie au douzième siècle*, 1957) (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), p. 36: 'the Christian contemplating the world is torn by a double attraction: to attain God through the world, the order of which reveals its creator, or to renounce the world, from which God is radically distinct'.

[8] For the idea of human beings as microcosms of the created order, and its origins in classical Greek philosophy (supremely in Plato's *Timaeus*), see Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society,* pp. 24–37, and Patricia Ranft, *The Theology of Work: Peter Damian and the Medieval Religious Renewal Movement* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 66–71, with refs. Among earlier Christian references to human beings as microcosms, see Bede, *De temporum ratione*, 35: 'man himself, who is called "microcosm" by the wise, that is, "a smaller universe" has his body tempered in every respect by these same qualities [earth, water, air and fire]' (ET by Faith Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1999) pp. 100–1).

[9] Letter 108, vol. 3, pp. 195–6. NB Reindel's footnotes on ibid., p. 195 nn20-23; ET, vol. 5, p. 201.

[10] *Novitas doctrinae* is criticized in Letter 19, vol. 1, p. 188, ET, vol. 1, p. 181.

[11] See for example Romans 8 and Galatians 3. For Peter Damian's view of the world as a place of conflict see e.g. Letter 108: 'The person, moreover, who occupies himself with the words of the divine Scriptures, is not unaware that a great number of heavenly forces daily course through the world, reaching out to us a helping hand in our struggle' (vol. 3, p. 197; ET, vol. 5, p. 202).

bishop of Ostia in 1057), and his persistent sense of vocation to the eremitical life at Fonte Avellana, is well known.[12] In a letter to Pope Alexander II in 1063, he writes:

> As I restrict myself to the confines of my cell, it is as if I live in a safe harbour or at a lonely post on the shore. But of what good is that to me? For while I am here in apparent security, eager to partake of the peace of quiet leisure, the blasts of a savage world strike at me, and a flood of overwhelming affairs violently swells in on me.[13]

Elsewhere he writes with extraordinary frankness about his proneness to anger and lust, and of how 'the slightest vexation (*offensio*) afflicts and disturbs my inner repose'.[14] Yet he is also aware of how it is precisely these *offensiones* which make an authentic spiritual life possible: in one of his sermons, he celebrates the lives of the early martyrs Vitalis and Ursicinus in such a way as to make their lives paradigms for the monastic or eremitic life, and goes on to make it clear that those called to such a life are not at all immune from what he calls the 'whirlpool of mortal fear' (*vorago periculosi timoris*): in the Bible, he recalls, it was precisely Elijah's weakness which was the guardian of his virtue, and St Peter's denial of Christ which deepened his compassion for those who later would be tempted to do the same.[15] Vice, like a wound, teaches us our fragility, and our need of a saviour.[16] In one of his longest letters, the *Liber Gratissimus*, he reflects on the validity of the ministry of simoniac and other unworthy clergy, and asks

> Why . . . do human pride and foolhardiness boast that the sins of others can defile the purity of an innocent person . . . while often those who begin badly, finish well, and by making satisfaction through a purer life (*emendatioris vitae satisfactione*) bring their perverse beginnings to a happy conclusion?[17]

Sin can be overcome; but only by a costly willingness to make satisfaction; and the greater the sin, the greater the satisfaction needed – not in order to win our salvation, but in order to receive it in a freely willed imitation of our saviour.[18]

[12] For Peter Damian's life, see esp. Lucchesi, 'Per una vita . . .' There is a good summary in Cantin, *Saint Pierre Damien (1007–1072) autrefois – aujourd'hui* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), ch. 1.

[13] Letter 96, vol. 3, p. 47; ET, vol. 5, p. 52.

[14] Letter 80, vol. 2. See also Cantin, *Saint Pierre Damien* . . . ch. 1 ('Le combat d'un contemplatif').

[15] Sermon 17(2): 3,4, CCCM 57, p. 98. Cf. Sermon 30:3 (CCCM 57:174–5), which beautifully celebrates St Peter's alternating weakness and strength. All translations from the sermons are my own. The Sermons may be found here: *Sancti Petri Damiani Sermones*, ed. Giovanni Lucchesi (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM), 57, Turnhout: Brepols, 1983).

[16] Sermon 17(2): 5, CCCM 57, p. 101: 'quid vitium nisi vulnus?'

[17] Letter 40:18, vol. 1, p. 436. This translation seems preferable to Blum's 'by the compensation of a perfect life', since *satisfactio* is more likely to mean 'reparation' or 'indemnification'. See Letter 31 cap. 23 n7 and Reindel *Die Briefe* . . . vol. 4, p. 514 under *satisfactio*.

[18] 'If one considers the law of discretion, then the more any person is burdened with offences the more he must be burdened with a greater weight of satisfaction,' Letter 153, vol. 4, p. 23, ET, vol. 7, p. 25. See Blum, *St Peter Damian: His Teaching on the Spiritual Life*, Studies in Mediaeval History, 10 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1947), pp. 77–8. 'As Christ handed himself over for us to death, let us mortify in ourselves, for love of him, every pleasure of earthly lust; and let those whom pride cast down be raised up by humility of life. Hence what the pastor of the church wrote: "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you might follow in his footsteps (1 Pet. 2.21)." Let us now taste, beloved, with Christ the transient bitterness of temporary death, so that afterwards we may deserve to attain to the eternal sweetness of his resurrection. What he did for us, he also asks us to do ourselves' (Sermon 45:9-10, CCCM 57, p. 271).

For Damian, Christ our saviour embraced the full paradoxical reality of cosmic and creaturely existence: in a Christmas sermon, he declares that the one who was great *in forma Dei* was made little *in forma servi*, 'so that neither was that greatness diminished by this littleness, nor this littleness oppressed by that greatness'.[19] And, because of who he was, and of what he did, Christ's redemptive work reverses human values and status: quoting the angels' greeting to the shepherds ('Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill') in a Christmas sermon, Damian concludes:

> Let us reflect on our Redeemer's humility with all our attention, beloved; let us despise the glory of the world, and reckon ourselves to be poor with Christ . . . . Today peace has been made between God and human beings, not with human beings of great wealth, earthly wisdom, or eminent nobility, but with those of goodwill.[20]

This is no empty rhetoric. Damian makes the same point in another sermon, this time in honour of St Matthew:

> So as to give sinners a firm hope, Christ chose for the chief place among his apostles not people regarded by human beings as just, and who appeared distinguished for a measure of holiness, but those who were unacquainted with justice, and even sinners: hence not Zechariah, who "lived blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord", or Nathaniel, "in whom there was no guile", or Simeon, in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt, and whom God had promised that he would see Christ the Lord before he died . . . but instead simple and sinful people (*simplices potius ac peccatores*) . . . so that each of them could sincerely say "by the grace of God I am what I am [1 Cor. 15.10]".[21]

It is this Christocentric theology which lies at the heart of his understanding of the monastic, and especially the eremitical, life. The letter which Damian wrote to the hermit Leo, entitled in several manuscripts 'The Book of "The Lord be with You" (*Liber qui appellatur Dominus vobiscum*)', in which he seeks to answer the question whether those living in solitude should say 'The Lord be with you' when saying their prayers, since there was no one to answer them, ends with a remarkable and extended celebration of the eremitical life (*Laus eremiticae vitae*).[22] This is suffused with the rhetoric of a world turned upside-down: the hermit's cell is the burning fiery furnace in which those who enter, like the three young Jews in the book of Daniel, defy

[19] '*ut nec ista brevitate magnitudo illa minueretur, nec illa magnitudine ista brevitas premeretur*', Sermon 61:2, CCCM 57, p. 359.

[20] Lk. 2.14, citing the reading in the NRSV footnote which is closer to the Vulgate text used by Peter Damian; Sermon 61:4, CCCM 57, p. 360.

[21] Sermon 51:15, CCCM 57, pp. 329–30. Cf. Sermon 57:9 (for St Andrew): 'Those who had been virtually the last among human beings are now fellowcitizens and sharers with the angels' (CCCM 57, p. 354).

[22] Letter 28, vol.1, pp. 248–78. The *Laus eremiticae vitae* begins on p. 272. On the identity of the hermit Leo, see ibid., p. 250, n 2. ET in vol. 1, pp. 255–89, with the footnote about Leo on p. 255, n 2.

the powers of this world, suffer, yet walk free from bondage;[23] it is a place where exiled humanity is called back to the heights of its former dignity; it is 'the mirror of souls (*speculum animarum*), in which the human soul, beholding itself in all clarity, supplies what is wanting, represses what is superfluous, straightens what is askance, and orders what is misshapen (*quod minus est impleat, quod superfluum reprimat, quod obliquum est dirigat, quod deforme componat*)';[24] it is the place where souls are set free (Damian here takes up the theme of the opening line of the letter, where he describes the hermit Leo as having 'become a recluse for love of heavenly freedom').[25] Even more important, Damian says of the life of the cell that 'whoever strives to persevere in their desire to love you, will indeed dwell in you, but God will dwell in them' – a point to which we shall return.[26]

In the life of a community like Fonte Avellana, where the monks spent most of their time alone or in pairs in cells grouped around a church, Damian is arguing that a dramatic reversal of worldly structures and values takes place: by virtue of the cross of Christ, who died to free human beings from those structures and values, the lowly become heirs of eternal glory.[27] So the eremitic life serves to exemplify a truth that nonetheless applies to all Christians everywhere. In a letter to his nephew Marinus, Damian warns him: 'do not ever draw up a genealogy of your forebears, that you might boast of the empty nobility of someone else's name. Surely, he who is an heir of God and a coheir with Christ surpasses every family of earthly origin.'[28] In another letter, he tells the monks of a Latin monastery in Constantinople that 'the court of heaven is open equally to residents of any land on earth; and where the values of true belief and a holy lifestyle (*rectae fidei et sanctae conversationis*) are the same, diversity or variety of language does not stand in the way'.[29] In a remarkable letter to the eremitical community of Gamugno, criticizing them for their greed, he declares that

> he who takes from the wealthy rather than from the unfortunate to provide for his brothers who are in need, or who supports some pious work, or, more importantly, who relieves the poor in their necessity, should not be counted an avaricious man,

[23] Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 273; ET, vol. 1, p. 281. For the three walking free in the furnace, see Dan. 3.92 Vulg. The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego in Daniel 3, itself a powerful tale of how the faith and courage of the three powerless Jews subverts the brute power of Nebuchadnezzar, appears regularly in Peter Damian's works: see e.g. Letter 1:38, vol. 1, p. 84; Letter 27, vol. 1, pp. 243 and 245; Letter 82, vol. 2, p. 446; Letter 153, vol. 4, p. 53; and Sermon 22:5, CCCM 57, p. 144.

[24] Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 276, ET, vol. 1, p. 286. The language is anticipatory of the Pentecost Sequence.

[25] Ibid., p. 277, ET, p. 287; for the opening address see ibid., p. 250, ET, p. 255.

[26] Ibid., p. 278.

[27] For Damian's devotion to the Cross, see the two prayers attributed to him which are likely to be authentic, and which combine a pervasive sense of personal sin and wretchedness with prayer, through the merits of the Cross, for the person's penitence to be accepted: the first prayer, strikingly, asks for the gift of all the key virtues ('*tribue mihi veram fidem, spem firmam, caritatem non fictam. Sit in me fixa humilitas, sobria vita, vera scientia, fortitudo, prudentia, justitia, temperantia, cursus rectus, finis perfectus . . .*'), *Orationes* 28 and 32, PL 145:928-9; for their authenticity, see A. Wilmart, "Les prières de saint Pierre Damien pour l'adoration de la Croix," in his *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin*, (Paris, 1932, repr. in Études Augustiniennes, Paris, 1971), pp. 138–46.

[28] Letter 132, vol. 3, p. 451; ET, vol. 6, p. 70.

[29] Letter 131, vol. 3, p. 437; ET, vol. 6, p. 55.

> but as one who justly moves common goods from one group of brethren to another. One man is richer than others, not for the reason that he alone should possess the things he holds in trust, but that he disburse them to the poor. He should distribute the goods of others, not as their owner but as an agent, and not merely through motives of charity, but of justice . . . .[30]

Damian could say this not just because he believed it but because he lived it: monastic poverty was absolutely central to the eremitical life;[31] and that life reversed worldly values. Equally extraordinary is the letter he wrote to Cencius, the prefect of Rome (and a layperson), who had stood in for Damian when the latter's voice failed while preaching at St Peter's church in Rome: citing two New Testament texts about the priesthood of all believers, Damian declares that 'it follows . . . that by the grace of Christ every Christian is a priest, and hence has a perfect right to proclaim his wondrous deeds'.[32] Later in this letter, he compares the star that led the magi to the infant Christ to 'every simple priest of upright life, who even though deficient in the richness of speech, by his outstanding deeds still shines, as it were, with the brilliance of his exemplary life, and those whom he fails to teach by his words, he inspires by the example of his intense spirituality (*vivae conversationis informat exemplo*)'.[33]

These texts make it clear that Peter Damian's celebration of the eremitical life, such as is found in 'The Book of "The Lord be with You"', is more than just rhetorical propaganda for the life of communities such as Fonte Avellana. It is part of a coherent theological programme directed towards the renewal of both church and society, a programme within which the eremitical life was understood not so much as a flight *from* the world, but as a flight *for* the world – indeed as the highest possible exemplification of what it means to be a Christian; and the remainder of this chapter will be concerned with showing what that meant in both theory and practice.

At the heart of Damian's theological programme is the figure of Christ, and not just the suffering Christ on the cross but the Christ whose beauty and attractiveness can be known only by those who love him. In a sermon for the church of St Apollinare in his home town of Ravenna, he describes Christ as 'the gentle king (*mitissimus rex*) [who]

[30] Letter 142, vol.3, pp. 509–10; ET, vol.6, p. 132. On this text, see Reindel, *Die Briefe* . . . p. 520, n 16, and Blum/Resnick *The Letters* . . ., p. 127, n 1.

[31] 'Let us return, beloved, to the innocence of the early church, so that we may learn to leave behind what we possess and rejoice in the simplicity of royal poverty,' Sermon 53:9, CCCM 57, p. 340. See also Blum, *St Peter Damian* . . ., pp. 91–2 and R. Grégoire, 'La place de la pauvreté dans la conception et la pratique de la vie monastique médiévale latine', in *Il monachesimo e la riforma ecclesiastica (1049–1122)* (Atti della IV Settimana Internazionale di Studio, Mendola 23–29 August 1968), (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1971), pp. 189–90.

[32] Letter 145, vol. 3, p. 528; ET, vol. 6, p. 151.

[33] Ibid., p. 530, ET, p. 152. On the royal priesthood to which all Christians belong, cf. Sermon 72:5, CCCM 57, pp. 423–4. Part of the appeal of the eremitical life in the eleventh century may well have been to low-born and illiterate people who could not have been admitted to the life of the choir-monk in established monastic houses: see André Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West* (ET by Colette Friedlander of *La spiritualité du moyen âge occidental*, 1975; Cistercian Studies, 145), (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1993), p. 60.

made us heirs of his kingdom'.[34] And in one of his finest letters, addressed to a countess who had left 'the world' to enter a convent, he describes Christ as

> altogether desirable (*totus desiderabilis*), either because as St Peter says [1 Pet. 1.12] the angels desire to see him, or because the whole mystery of his humanity kindles desire in the minds of the elect, so that not only does the glory of the resurrection provoke them, but the shame of his passion invites them also to imitate his example.[35]

He writes of the familiar fellowship (*contubernium familiare*) of those who contemplate Christ and leave the world for him:

> O what a sweet relationship (*suave commercium*), and what unspeakable sweetness arises in human hearts, when creator and creature delight in sharing their affections! . . . . So let Christ through his mystery appear to you on your lips, let Christ through the fire of his love (*incendium amoris sui*) always live in your heart.[36]

Interpreting a text from the Song of Songs ('My beloved is to me like a bundle of myrrh, resting between my breasts'), he argues that the myrrh, used to anoint the dead, represents Christ's passion; and that the heart is situated between the breasts, 'so whoever through continual love embraces Christ in the secret places of her heart, whoever meditates constantly on the mystery of his passion by the grace of imitating him, certainly finds Christ to be a bundle of myrrh dwelling between her breasts'.[37]

This kind of allegorizing of the Song of Songs is common in western medieval spirituality.[38] What is striking is the interrelation of Christ's passion and resurrection, the emphasis on the importance of imitating him, and the stress on the intimate mutual love of Christ and the human person made available to those who do so, as the Countess Blanca had done, by embracing the religious life. But there is something more important still. At the conclusion of the letter, Damian offers an extended celebration of the joys of paradise: '[there] all that is hidden stands revealed to the eyes of all. There the minds of all, brought into one by the union of mutual love, do not disagree with each other, but all are unanimously joined in a common will'.[39]

This brings us to the greatest of all the paradoxes that comprise Damian's theology of the spiritual life. Those who leave the world in a lived imitation of Christ – and in

[34] Sermon 48:6, CCCM 57, pp. 296–7. For Peter Damian on the royalty of Christ, see J. Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien ermite et homme de l'Église* (Rome: Edizioni di Storie a Letteratura, 1960), p. 227; and Giles Constable, 'The ideal of the imitation of Christ', in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 160–1.

[35] Letter 66, vol. 2, p. 257. Blum's translation (vol. 3, pp. 48–9) of *desiderabilis* as 'lovable' seems misguided, especially as *totus desiderabilis* is a citation from Song of Songs 5.16. On the imitation of Christ, see also Sermon 48:3, CCCM 57, p. 294. For Peter Damian on the imitation of Christ, see Constable, 'The ideal . . .' pp. 179–80.

[36] Letter 66, vol. 2, pp. 254–5.

[37] Ibid., p. 255. The text is from Song of Songs 1.12.

[38] See E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of my Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 1990); Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1990).

[39] Letter 66, vol. 2, p. 278.

particular those who embrace the solitary life as Damian had done – experience not just the possibility of an intimate relationship with Christ, but the discovery that, far from being alone, they are plunged into the very heart of the life of the Church. The life of paradise is lived in anticipation here on earth, and the poor and solitary monks are precisely its most resplendent first-fruits. It is described in one of Damian's poems:

> And where different merit is due to each for their labours,
> Love makes its own what it loves in the other;
> Thus what is proper to each becomes common to all.[40]

We return here to Damian's 'Book of "The Lord be with You"', where he tells the hermit Leo:

> Truly the Church of Christ is so joined together by the bond of love (*caritatis compage*) that in many it is one, and in each it is mystically complete (*ut et in pluribus una et in singulis sit per mysterium tota*). Thus we at once observe that the whole Church is rightly called the one and only bride of Christ, and we believe each individual soul, by the mystery of baptism, to be the whole church.[41]

How can one person be the whole church? Damian argues that, in the 'open fields' of Scripture, the Church is often represented by one man or one woman.[42] Furthermore,

> since the whole Church is symbolized (*designetur*) in the person of one individual *(persona*), and since, moreover, the Church is said to be one[43] virgin, holy Church is both one in all and complete in each of them (*et in omnibus sit una et in singulis tota*); that is to say, simple in many by reason of the unity of faith, and multiple in each through the glue of love and the various charismatic gifts, since all are from one, and all are one.[44]

This profound interrelation of the one and the many is rooted in his Christology as well as in his understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. If, as St Paul says, the whole Church is the body of Christ, any one part of it possesses the fullness of the body.[45] For Damian, this is why the whole Church can pray texts such as psalms that appear to be the prayers of individuals, and vice versa.[46] It is likely here that Damian is influenced by Augustine's idea of the *totus Christus*, which is particularly prominent in the latter's sermons on the Psalms. This is Augustine on Psalm 60 (61):

> If we are among [Christ's] members and find ourselves part of his body (which we dare to presume, since we have his word for it) we must recognize the voice that

[40] *Rhythmus de Gaudio Paradisi* 14, in *L'opera poetica,* p. 82. There is a charming English translation of this poem by Stephen A. Hurlbut, *The Song of S. Peter Damiani On the Joyes and Glory of Paradise*, (Washington DC: St Albans Press, 1928).
[41] Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 255, ET, vol. 1, p. 262.
[42] Ibid., p. 256, ET, vol. 1, p. 262.
[43] Blum has 'a' instead of 'one', which distorts the sense (ET, vol. 1, p. 262). Virginity here implies integrity, wholeness: see Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 264, ET, vol. 1, p. 273.
[44] Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 256. See ET by Blum, vol. 1, pp. 2623. Blum here translates *glutinum* as 'bond'.
[45] Letter 28, vol. 1, pp. 261–2. See 1 Cor. 12.12-13, quoted by Damian here.
[46] Ibid., p. 262.

> speaks in this psalm as our own voice, not as something alien. But when I say "our voice", I do not mean only the voice of us who are here today. It is the voice of all of us who are dispersed throughout the world, all of us from east to west. To make it clear to you that it is our own voice, the psalm speaks as though one single person is praying; but it is not a lone individual, it is a unity, speaking as one . . .[47]

The whole Christ, the *totus Christus*, is present in each member of his body, so that the one speaks for the many, one person's suffering is shared by the whole body, and one person's holiness enriches all.[48] In his Life of St Romuald, Damian describes the saint living in a monastery when he has a vision while celebrating mass: like St Paul, Romuald is 'rapt into heaven and brought (*oblatus*) before God, and at once commanded by the divine voice to expound the psalms', which he proceeds to do: this dramatic passage illustrates the interweaving of the one and the many, the solitary's contemplative vision providing nourishment for the community around him.[49]

The work of the Holy Spirit is as significant as the notion of the body of Christ in Damian's thought here. It is precisely through the power of the Spirit, 'who dwells in each person and at the same time fills all people, [that] it is revealed both that solitude is seen to be plural and a multitude solitary' (*hic solitudo pluralis illic multitudo singularis*).[50] Hence Damian's answer to Leo the hermit: 'When I am alone and use the words commonly employed by the Church, I demonstrate that I am one with her and that by the presence of the Spirit I truly abide in her.'[51] In the rich Trinitarian theology of his letter to the monk Ambrose, Damian speaks of the Spirit who 'abides (*manet*) in both [the Father and the Son] in such a way that he might constantly proceed from both: he proceeds in such a way that he might abide inseparably in them'. The language of abiding or indwelling here is another echo of the theology of the evangelist St John.[52]

[47] Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms (Enarrationes in Psalmos)* 60, ET by Maria Boulding OSB (*The Works of Saint Augustine*, vol. III/17), (New York: New City, 2001), p. 193. For Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus*, see J. Byassee, *Praise Seeking Understanding: Reading the Psalms with Augustine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) pp. 57ff.

[48] 'In the human body . . . the eyes, the tongue, the feet, the hands each have a function naturally proper to them. But the hands do not touch for their own benefit, or the feet walk, or the tongue speak, or the eyes behold just for themselves, but that which every part of the body can do specifically, is clearly performed commonly for all . . . .So . . . the part functions for the whole and the whole for its parts,' Letter 28, vol. 1, pp. 260–1, ET vol. 1, p. 268.

[49] *Vita B. Romualdi* 50, ed. G. Tabacco (Petri Damiani, Vita Beati Romualdi, ed. G. Tabacco, Rome 1957 (Fonti per la Storia d'Italia, vol. 94), pp. 92–3. For an English translation with commentary, see C. R. Phipps, *Saint Peter Damian's Vita Beati Romualdi*, unpub. DPhil thesis, King's College London, 1988. For Damian's presentation of St Romuald as an exemplar of Damian's view of the eremitic life, see Colin (C. R.) Phipps, 'Romuald – Model Hermit: Eremitical Theory in Saint Peter Damian's *Vita Beati Romualdi*, Chapters 16-27', in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, Studies in Church History 22, ed. W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 65–78.

[50] Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 257. For the significance of *solitudo pluralis*, see the papers by A. M. Allchin and Dom André Louf OCSO in *Solitude and Communion: Papers on the Hermit Life*, ed. A. M. Allchin (Oxford: Fairacres Publications, 1977), pp. 1–29.

[51] Letter 28, vol. 1, p. 260, ET, vol. 1, p. 267.

[52] 'As a divine quality, abiding expresses the intimacy and reciprocity that, for John, lie at the heart of the universe. The relationship between God and Jesus, father and son, is the symbol and archetype of abiding. . . . The symbolism of the vine signifies growth and fecundity, mutuality and homecoming, friendship and self-giving. Yet abiding, as a force for life, does not bypass suffering and death: the vine-dresser prunes, the world pours scorn, the seed "dies", the son creates community with his dying breath' (Dorothy Lee, 'Abiding in the Fourth Gospel', in *A Feminist Companion to John,* vol. 2, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) p. 73.).

The Spirit possesses with the other Persons both 'the fullness of unity, and the unity of fullness' (*et unitatis plenitudinem, et plenitudinis unitatem*). 'And this is that highest love (*caritas*), by which the one begotten is loved by the one who begets, and loves his begetter.'[53] Hence the paradox: the solitary monks of a place like Fonte Avellana incarnate more fully than any other part of the Church the central truth of Christian faith: their renunciation of the world bears witness to a God who 'emptied himself, taking the form of a slave', and their solitude in community to God's indwelling presence in an intimate union with those who love him above all else.

But such a life is not possible without sacrifice, and in particular without acknowledging the terrible reality of human sin. It is very important for Peter Damian that the presence of the whole Church in each individual Christian occurs irrespective of that person's worthiness or quality of life. In the monumental *Liber Gratissimus*, arguing for the validity of the ministry of simoniac priests, he says that 'just as the single soul is spread through all the members of the body, so is the Holy and Universal Church animated by the one Spirit of God'.[54] But the presence of the Spirit varies in degree and significance according to both the worthiness and the particular vocation of the individual; and, quoting St Augustine, Damian insists that although the wicked person can receive all the sacraments, the divine love cannot dwell in him or her.[55] Hence the crucial importance of the 'bond' or 'glue' of love in his work.[56] In a complex letter about the legitimacy of marriage between people who are related to one another, he

[53] Letter 81, vol. 2, p. 421.

[54] Letter 40:16, vol. 1, p. 429, ET, vol. 2, pp. 146–7. Cf. 1 Cor. 12.12–13.

[55] Letter 40:10, vol. 1, p. 413, ET, vol. 2, p. 132.

[56] Reindel notes that the words *compages* (a joining together), *vinculum* (bond), and *glutinum* (glue) are all common words in Damian's letters. Of these, the latter is the most important: see, for example, the end of Letter 89, where Peter Damian argues that the harmony between papacy and emperor reflects the harmony won by Christ between God and human beings, and that the glue of mutual love (*mutuae caritatis glutino*) should bind them together in a manner that no wouldbe fomenters of division (such as the antipope Cadalus) could overturn (vol. 2, pp. 571–2); Letter 96, where he writes of a *mutuae dilectionis glutino* (vol. 3, p. 62); Letter 113, where he tells abbot Hugh of Cluny that 'you . . . have safely sent me back to my own monastery, but hold me firmly bound by the glue of your love (*glutino vestrae caritatis*)' (vol. 3, p. 289, ET, vol. 5, p. 286); Letter 134: 'I beg the Holy Spirit that after I am dead, the same harmony flourish among you that now by the bond of charity unites you (*unam per caritatis glutinum conflat*) in one heart and one soul' (vol. 3, p. 456, ET, vol. 6, p. 76); Letter 136: 'Jesus, vigorous and truly desirable, rescued the Church from menial service to the proud prince of this world, and joined her to himself by the bond of intimate union (*sibique confoederationis intimae glutino counivit*)' (vol. 3, p. 466, ET, vol. 6, p. 88); in the important Letter 153, he tells a monastic community to be 'concerned with how fraternal love may unite you in Christ through the glue of mutual love (*per amoris mutui glutinum cohalescat*)' (vol. 4, p. 46); later in the same letter he says that 'one who presents himself outwardly as worthy of love and conserves inwardly a loving nature, who displays the fruit of kindness, . . . inwardly establishes a deep root because he loves from the heart; . . . he is lined with pitch both within and without because he is joined to his neighbours by the double glue of love (*duplici caritatis glutino*)' (ibid., p. 65, ET, vol. 7, p. 69, translation slightly amended). See also Sermon 21:3: 'if, then we do not want to wither away like barren trees, let the root of our hope always cleave through the glue of love (*per caritatis glutinum*) to the humanity of our Redeemer' (CCCM 57, p. 136); Sermon 35:2, on the holy virgins Flora and Lucilla: 'the blessed virgins sing in harmony, and despite having one husband between them they know no jealousy, and blend two souls into one as through the glue of love (*per caritatis glutinum*), saying "My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh"' (CCCM 57, p. 212); Sermon 72:9: 'the temple of God is the people of God: the stones represent human beings; and the cement is the adhesive glue of love (*tenax coagulum caritatis*)' (CCCM 57, p. 427). The image of the 'glue of love'

insists that consanguinity creates a 'bond of affinity' (*affinitatis vinculum*) which makes them one, and which therefore makes marriage between them both unnecessary and even incestuous. Instead, the *lex matrimonii* was created so that the 'bond of mutual love' (*mutuae caritatis vinculum*) between people might be maintained, in cases where no consanguinity exists.[57] It is true that Damian would prefer to see people flee 'the world' altogether, since the divine judgement is 'close at hand'.[58] Even so, his emphasis on marriage as being created in order to restore 'the fragile fire of mutual love' (*mutuae caritatis igniculum*) is very striking.[59] And if mutual love can be created or restored through marriage, it can attain yet more in the life of those who have sacrificed all that the world counts precious in response to the God who in Christ did exactly that for us. But the gift of that love demands in response an unconditional and uncompromising life of penance: just as Damian's near-contemporary and fellow-reformer Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory VII, attempted radically to overhaul the system of penance 'by insisting upon the total and inner conversion of the individual Christian', so Damian sought to exemplify this; and the solitary monk's fierce asceticism did more than just unite him to his crucified Redeemer: it served, through the *glutinum caritatis*, to share in Christ's continuing redemption of the world.[60]

Yet this is easier said than done. Citing Aristotle's division of the soul into three parts (the rational, the irascible and the lustful), he points out that what is intrinsic to our nature is not overcome without great effort.[61] But then what else does it mean to become a monk if not to be converted (*Quid est enim aliud monachum fieri quam converti?*)[62] – from a narrowly self-centred life, St Paul's life 'according to the flesh', to the God-centred, and other-directed, life of the monk? Humanly, this is impossible – hence Damian's celebration of the Cross: 'through you pilgrims cross over to become family members (*peregrini transeunt in domesticos*), and those who were once guests

recurs in the Vulgate: see e.g. Deut. 10.15, 'the Lord was bound together with your ancestors, and loved them (*patribus tuis conglutinatus est Dominus, et amavit eos*)'; 1 Sam. 18.1, 'when David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as he loved his own soul (*et factum est cum complesset loqui ad Saul: anima Ionathae conglutinata est animae David, et dilexit eum Ionathas quasi animam suam*)'; Sir. 25.16 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of love for him, and faith is the beginning of clinging to him *(timor Dei initium dilectionis eius; fidei autem initium agglutinandum est ei*)'; Jer. 13.11 'for as the loincloth clings to one's loins, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, says the Lord (*sicut enim adhaeret lumbare ad lumbos viri, sic agglutinavi mihi omnem domum Israel, et omnem domum Iuda, dicit Dominus*)'.

[57] Letter 19, vol. 1, pp. 183–4. The emphasis here on the importance of mutual love in marriage is very striking, and is further developed in the ensuing paragraph of the letter.

[58] *Nunc divino iam imminente iuditio*; Letter 19, vol. 1, p. 198.

[59] Letter 19, vol. 1, p. 184. Blum *The Letters. . .* (vol. 1, p. 176) has 'the flickering fire of mutual love'. See also Sermon 17:1, where Damian describes the marriage of St Vitalis and Valeria as 'this immaculate marriage of mutual love' (*inmaculatus mutuae caritatis thalamus*), CCCM 57, p. 88.

[60] H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII 1073–1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 695. For Damian and Hildebrand, see Angelo Baronio, 'L'amicizia di San Pier Damiani e Ildebrando', in *La preparazione della Riforma Gregoriana e del pontificato di Gregorio VII* (Atti del IX Convego del Centro di Studi Avellaniti), Fonte Avellana 1985, pp. 43–68; and Giuseppe Fornasari, *Medioevo Riformato del secolo XI: Pier Damiani e Gregorio VII* (Naples: Liguori, 1996).

[61] Letter 80, vol. 2, p. 405.

[62] Letter 38, vol. 1, p. 352; ET, vol. 2, p. 77. On this important statement, see Miccoli, 'Théologie de la vie monastique chez saint Pierre Damien', in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (*Théologie,* vol. 49), Paris: Aubier, 1961, pp. 459–84, p. 469.

become fellow-citizens with the apostles'.[63] For Damian, the true heart of the monastic life is, or should be 'zeal for God and mortification of self', for it consists of nothing less than a full living-out of St Paul's exhortation that we should be 'always bearing in our bodies the mortification of Jesus'.[64] If we do this, then 'since the human mind cannot remain entirely empty or unoccupied without love of something', then our natural capacity for love will be transfigured, and 'all our delight will be lifted up and carried over into God (*omnis nostra delectatio in Deum suspensa transferret*)'.[65] So the true monk, who has genuinely abandoned the world, should 'seek the secret place of his mind, where he may burn with all his efforts to see the face of his Creator', and he should seek the spiritual gift of tears, because they serve to dispel fear of austerity, and turn severity and affliction into sweetness.[66]

To embrace the eremitic life is to make yourself a nomad who yet experiences the deepest interior repose, an anticipation of the eternal sabbath – another aspect of its paradoxical nature.[67] And you must do this for the sake of others: the monastery is for Damian a place of spiritual combat against 'untiring adversaries', a combat which is waged for the sake of those outside as much as for those within, yet without becoming 'involved in external affairs in the interest of another's salvation'.[68] Much of Peter Damian's own life was spent trying to practise his own advice here, seeking to bear fruit for the Church he loved and longed to help renew, precisely by appearing to withdraw from it into solitude. In a letter to Pope Nicholas II he asks,

> Why should I be held guilty of fault for turning my back on pastoral duties, since in my daily involvement in secular affairs I am growing lukewarm in my love of God and begin to feel the deadly cold of a languid spirit?. . . .I stand in horror . . . when I hear my many words that were not conducive to leading anyone to Christ – all the nonsense and trifling worldly speech that I uttered . . . .Often, in an intensely vivid mental vision (*praesentissimo mentis intuitu*), I beheld Christ pierced with nails, hanging on the cross, and with my mouth I eagerly tried to catch the dripping blood.[69]

[63] Sermon 48, CCCM 57, p. 304 – part of another *Laus crucis* in a sermon for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

[64] 2 Cor. 4.10. Letter 153, vol. 4, p. 17, ET, vol. 7, p. 18.

[65] Letter 153, vol. 4, p. 17.

[66] Ibid., p. 37, ET, vol. 7, pp. 39–40. For the gift of tears, see esp. Letter 50, vol. 2, pp. 119–23, and Blum, *St Peter Damian* . . . pp. 79–81.

[67] In Letter 160, Damian argues that the reversal represented by the monastic life reflects the great reversal of Christ, who embraced our humanity and draws us on a journey towards him. He establishes a dialectic between dwelling and journeying: 'we should note that since travelling and lodging (*ire et manere*), and therefore a journey and a resting place (*iter et mansio*), are totally opposed to one another, and have nothing in common, still Scripture confirms that both converged in reference to the host of the Israelites, so that as they moved through the wilderness, they were said both to be on a journey and to have observed rest stops (*ut illi per desertum et iter habuisse dicantur et mansiones*). This applies also to us . . .' vol. 4, p. 107, ET, vol. 7, p. 110. For a rich theology of the Sabbath, see Letters 27 and 49. For the idea of rest (*quies*) in the monastic life, see J. Leclercq, *Otia Monastica: Études sur le vocabulaire de la contemplation au moyen âge*, Studia Anselmiana 51 (Rome: Pontifical Institute of St Anselm, 1963).

[68] Letter 165, vol. 4, p. 223; ET, vol. 7, p. 220.

[69] Letter 72, vol. 2, pp. 342–3, ET, vol. 3, pp. 129–30, translation slightly amended.

This is no hyperbole. It speaks of someone whose perseverance in the eremitical life had nurtured within him a different way of seeing, a contemplative vision of the dying Christ that radically changed the way he saw everything else. It enabled him to see the world, for which Christ died, through a spiritual understanding of Scripture which probed far deeper than that of a desiccated dialectic.[70] It also speaks of someone who had seen what high ecclesiastical office could do to a person: in a sermon he noted that both St Gregory the Great and St Martin of Tours had acknowledged that episcopacy had made them less holy than they were before.[71] Damian's response to that dilemma was not to abandon the Church, but to seek to renew it from within: to set out in words, and to live himself, an uncompromising reversal of all that 'the world' held dear, and by so doing to offer both Church and world a compelling vision of all that human beings, wretched sinners though they were, could through Christ become. The monastery is a place where 'what belongs to all is the right of each; and what is singularly special to each is, in the wholeness of faith and love, common to all'.[72] It anticipates paradise because it is open to all, including those who in worldly terms have least to commend them – the sinner, the uneducated, the failure.[73] He knew this was impossible for everyone: in one of his last letters, to the prefect Cencius, he warned him to

> Take care, lest out of devotion to your own prayer and for your own convenience you neglect the governance of such an innumerable population entrusted to you, and disregard the general well-being of the common people, which expects justice from you. Therefore what is it to practise justice, if not to pray?[74]

But for those called to leave the world for God, there was no limit to what they might do, or become: their exemplar was the Virgin Mary, who was greater than the apostles 'not only because of her virginal fecundity but also because she is made divine (*non solum quia fecunda est, sed quia deifica*)'.[75] Hence Damian wrote, 'let every brother now chastise himself in the narrow confines of his cloister, that a home of infinite dimensions may be made ready for him in heaven'.[76] He described the vocation of the priest (and thus his own) as being called to be 'the soul of compassion, caring for the Church's children like a forgiving mother, always gathering them to her breast and nourishing them with the richness of her teaching'.[77] He told his fellow-monk Stephen to 'be quick . . . to destroy all affection for sin, so that when you are admitted to the king's bedchamber you may join him as one of the family'.[78] At the end of his letter to the hermit Adam he wrote, 'so then, my dear friend, be what people say you are (*esto*

[70] Damian speaks of the 'essentials of spiritual interpretation (*medullas spiritalis intelligentiae*)', Letter 141, vol. 3, p. 496, ET, vol. 6, p. 119. See Cantin *Saint Pierre Damien. . .* pp. 88–105.
[71] Sermon 5:6, CCCM 57, p. 28.
[72] Letter 28, vol. 1, pp. 261–2; ET, vol. 1, p. 269.
[73] Letter 82, vol. 2, pp. 445–6. Cf. also Letter 131: 'The court of heaven is open equally to residents of any land on earth, and where the values of true belief and a holy lifestyle (*rectae fidei et sanctae conversationis idem est meritum*), diversity or variety of language does not stand in the way,' vol. 3, p. 437, ET, vol. 6, p. 55.
[74] Letter 155, vol. 4, p. 72; ET (slightly amended) vol. 7, pp. 76–7.
[75] Sermon 63:12, CCCM 57, p. 372.
[76] Letter 165, vol. 4, p. 227.
[77] Letter 67, vol. 2, p. 282; ET (slightly amended) vol. 3, p. 72.
[78] Letter 50, vol. 2, p. 120; ET (slightly amended) vol. 2, p. 323.

quod diceris)'.[79] And at the end of his account of the lives of two of his most famous disciples, he says of one of them, Dominic Loricatus (who excelled almost everyone in the intensity of his asceticism) that 'all of this life was for him [Dominic] made into a Good Friday, but in the next he celebrates in joy and splendour the eternal glory of the resurrection'.[80] St Peter Damian's life and writings were all of a piece: in both, he sought to do no more and no less than live out the full paradox of the Christian spiritual life as St Paul described it: '*quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes: sicut egentes, multos autem locupletantes: tanquam nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes* (in our sorrows, we have always cause for joy; poor ourselves, we bring wealth to many; penniless, we own the world)'.[81]

[79] Letter 92, vol. 3, p. 25; ET (amended) vol. 5, p. 25.
[80] *Vita SS Rodulphis et Dominici Loricati*, PL 144:1024A.
[81] 2 Cor. 6.10 (REB).

10

John of Fécamp and Anselm of Bec: A New Language of Prayer

Brian Patrick McGuire

Introduction: Remembering Richard Southern and his Anselm

Both Sister Benedicta Ward and myself were privileged to have Sir Richard Southern as our D. Phil. supervisor. A meeting with Dick, as Sir Richard insisted on being called, was often full of surprises, especially when he turned from the problematic paper which we had submitted and began to talk about his beliefs and experiences. In these tutorials was formed the basis for friendships which both Sister Benedicta and I value as one of the central bonds of our lives.

These meetings often led to discussions about religious faith, a subject which he almost never directly touched in his writings or lectures, though everything in his work as an historian reflects his solid anchoring in Christianity.[1] At some point in Oxford (it is not clear to me whether it was while he was an undergraduate or not until he became a Junior Research Fellow), he came across the prayers of Saint Anselm and began to read them in the original Latin. In their beauty, intricacy and insights he recognized his own pain, sense of loss, and yearning for union with a living, personal God who transcends all human barriers and takes the human person into his embrace.

So began Southern's lifelong love affair with Anselm of Aosta, Bec and Canterbury. His devotion to Anselm has left as its principal witnesses not one but two biographies of this central medieval figure, the first published in 1963, *Saint Anselm and his*

[1] Southern in a talk given to the Saint Johns Historical Society and published posthumously comes close to a declaration of his beliefs as an historian: 'The Truth about the Past', in R. J. Bartlett (ed.), *History and Historians. Selected Papers of R. W. Southern* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 120–34, esp. 132–4. Southern told me at one of our tutorials that he had grown up in a conventional Anglican environment in the North of England, but when he went up to Oxford in the midst of the Great Depression (Southern was born in 1912, so this must have been in 1930), he was shocked by the sight of the unemployed and impoverished population that filled the outskirts of the academic town. His Christianity could not account for the apparent collapse of society and the meaningless ordeals of decent people who went hungry and could not provide for their children. For a time he lost his religious faith. He could not believe in a God who could permit such suffering.

Biographer,[2] the second from 1990, *Saint Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape*.[3] The later volume was supposed to be a mild revision and updating of the first, but it is a new study, with less emphasis on monastic life in the period. The newer volume gave Southern an opportunity to carry on a detailed theological discussion with Anselm. As such it reflects the concerns of his later years, when he drew ever closer to his subject.[4]

As an historian who owes so much to Dick Southern, I have through my career kept a respectful distance from Saint Anselm, for how can I even begin to approach the depths of understanding which I found and still find in this friend and mentor? In Dick's interpretations of Anselm, the saint emerges soon after 1070 almost fully formed as a teacher and writer at Bec. Southern emphasized Anselm's seeking out of Lanfranc as teacher and his acceptance of him as mentor and guide, but it is unlikely Lanfranc would have been interested in the type of spiritual literature which emerged from Anselm's pen. The prayers of Saint Anselm seem to stand alone, for they contributed to a revolution in spiritual literature, a new orientation towards God, Christ, Mary and the other saints, who could be touched, spoken to, and approached through an intense language of yearning.[5] Thanks to the translations of Sister Benedicta Ward and her excellent introduction to the prayers and meditations, Anselm's achievement has now for decades been available to the larger public that makes use of the Penguin Classics.[6]

But where did this new spirituality come from? Southern himself virtually never made use of this term, which today is so fashionable. He once said to me that spirituality has to be located in distinct historical environments and institutions. It does not exist on its own. Certainly Anselm's spirituality, if I can allow the word for him, was present in his Benedictine world, the fruit of the office, the Psalms, his readings of the Church Fathers, especially Augustine, slowly and carefully absorbed in monastic *lectio*. Earlier generations of monks had drawn on the same sources of spirituality but had not found it necessary to formulate personal, individual prayers that expressed so immediate a sense of pain, longing and desire.

In terms of chronology and geography, it seems likely that Anselm would have profited from the spiritual writings of John of Fécamp, whose *Confessio theologica*, with its personal prayers, was completed before he became abbot in 1028.[7] By 1070, when John had been writing and revising his Confessions for several decades, Anselm began his prayers and meditations. But in his earlier Anselm biography, Southern in a severe footnote almost completely dismissed John's possible influence. He found hardly any

[2] *Saint Anselm and his Biographer. A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059-c.1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

[3] *Saint Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[4] I became intensely aware of this attentiveness one summer afternoon in the mid-1980s when I was looking for something in Southern's study on Saint Johns Street. I came across Anselm's Monologion open on Sir Richard's desk. He was beginning a revision of Anselm's theology for his new edition of the biography and so was returning in all humility to one of the central sources.

[5] 'The Anselmian Revolution', in *Saint Anselm and his Biographer*, pp. 42–7.

[6] *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm with the Proslogion*, trans. Sister Benedicta Ward, S. L. G. (London: Penguin Books, 1973).

[7] André Wilmart, 'Deux Préfaces spirituelles de Jean de Fécamp', *Revue d'ascetique et mystique* 18 (1937), pp. 3–44, esp. p. 43.

link between 'the solid, biblically heavily-laden theological meditations of John of Fécamp and the poignant personal and intellectual effusions of Anselm'.[8] The purpose of this paper is to see if Southern was right, whether John and Anselm inhabited disparate worlds in terms of their personal spirituality, or if there is any common factor in the prayers of John and those of Anselm. My purpose here is to consider the heritage of Richard Southern that remains so important for Sister Benedicta Ward, myself and many others who have spent our lives in trying to understand and formulate the meaning of medieval life and spirituality.

Who was John of Fécamp?

When Southern was writing his first Anselm biography in the late 1950s and early 1960s, John of Fécamp had already been discovered and placed on the map of monastic spirituality. The textual studies made by André Wilmart after the First World War had established his prominence in the revival of monastic life and thought that took place in the eleventh century.[9] Until Wilmart, John's identity had been hidden behind attributions to other writers, such as Augustine and Gregory the Great, but Wilmart restored John to his rightful role as what Jean Leclercq and Jean-Paul Bonnes called a 'master of the spiritual life in the eleventh century'.[10] Wilmart had already established that the *Confessio theologica* of John underwent three major phases, but Leclercq and Bonnes limited themselves to the first phase in their edition from 1946, for as they wrote, there were not three different works, only 'different forms of the same work'.[11]

One might think that this important work with manuscripts and editing would have given John of Fécamp an important place in medieval history, or at least in the history of medieval spirituality. But the visitor who today comes to the former abbey church of Fécamp will find that in all its gothic glory there is no trace of John, not even a memorial plaque. The man who in 1001 refounded the abbey, William of Volpiano, has a significant grave monument. He used to be called John's uncle, but this is a late attribution. There is no doubt, however, that John, who came from the north of Italy as William did, was greatly influenced by this great monastic reformer, who was summoned from his abbacy at Saint Benigne of Dijon to make Fécamp into one of the great Norman Benedictine abbeys.[12] It was adjacent to the palace of the Dukes of Normandy and the abbey contributed to their efforts, as in helping pay for the conquest of England in 1066.

John became the prior of William of Volpiano and from 1028 to 1078 he was abbot of Fécamp, involved in the political affairs of his day but also caught up in revising

[8] Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer*, p. 47.
[9] André Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen age latin. Études d'histoire littéraries* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971, originally 1932).
[10] Jean Leclercq and Jean-Paul Bonnes, *Un maître de la vie spirituelle au XIe siècle. Jean de Fécamp* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1946).
[11] Leclercq and Bonnes, *Un maître*, p. 37.
[12] The source for William of Volpiano's efforts is the Chronicle of the abbey of Saint Benigne of Dijon, found in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 162, at col. 827.

his *Confessio theologica*. But according to Wilmart, the first version, the one printed in 1946, was already completed before 1018, while John was still prior. Today there is an excellent French translation with a good introduction that for the most part repeats the background information already found in Leclercq's and Bonne's edition.[13] Fortunately a Yale graduate student, Lauren Mancia, is completing a thesis on John that hopefully will turn into a monograph and make him better known to the English reading public.[14]

Until now, John has been a figure known only to specialists in eleventh-century monastic Normandy, while Anselm has taken his place as one of the leading medieval thinkers and a prominent archbishop of Canterbury.[15] My task here is not to prove or disprove Anselm's immediate dependency on John. A careful review of the latter's *Theological Confession* has not turned up any phrases from which Anselm borrowed directly. But I have been fascinated by Southern's rejection of John's influence, and so I want to ask the same question that he did: are there any similarities between the two spiritual writers that indicate Anselm may have found inspiration in John's prayers? Surely geography argues for a possible connection, since Bec lies about 80 km from Fécamp and the two abbeys belonged to the same Norman world that grew so strong in the eleventh century. My method will be simply to look at the two texts, but limiting myself to the last 400 lines of the *Confessio theologica* in comparing them with Anselm's prayer to Christ, which is under 200 lines. I will consider how John addresses Jesus and what he asks from him. I will do the same with Anselm.

For John I will be looking at the *Tertia pars*, lines 922–1304, sections 27–32 in the *Confessio thelogica*, including what is entitled a *recapitulatio* on the last two pages. The work is divided into three books, of which the first two and a half are largely dependent on biblical, patristic and medieval sources. Leclercq and Bonnes have helpfully placed these sources in italics, and many pages are almost completely italicized. From section 27, however, John of Fécamp changes his approach and seemingly becomes more independent, providing a text that is basically his own. There are still many biblical borrowings, as well as prayers taken from the liturgy, especially the Mass itself. But we are looking at what basically is a fresh composition, in which John expresses his own personal devotion to Christ. As he begins: 'Love which always burns and is never extinguished, sweet Christ, good Jesus, love, my God, consume me whole in your fire, your love, your attachment, your desire, your charity, joy and exultation, delight and sweetness, sensuality and longing' (l. 922–26).[16]

[13] Jean de Fécamp, *La Confession théologique* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2007).

[14] 'Jean at Fécamp', paper given at the Medieval Congress, Western Michigan University, 9 May 2013. I am very grateful to Lauren Mancia for sharing the text of this paper with me and look forward to her further work. She has read an early draft of this article and made excellent suggestions, not all of which I have space here to follow.

[15] As seen recently in Sally N. Vaughn's fine contribution to the Archbishop of Canterbury Series, *Archbishop Anselm 1093–1109. Bec Missionary, Canterbury Primate, Patriarch of Another World* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

[16] Leclercq and Bonnes, *Jean de Fécamp*, p. 171: 'Amor qui semper ardes, et nunquam extingueris: dulcis Christe, bone Iesu, caritas, Deus meus, accende me totum igne tuo, amore tuo, dilectione tua, desiderio tuo, caritate tua, iucunditate et exultatione tua, delectatione et suavitate tua, voluptate et concupiscentia tua . . . .'

John piles up a number of epithets to describe his bond with Christ. As we will see, Anselm does something similar in his prayer to Jesus, but he prefers verbal to substantive expressions and thus makes his text more dynamic. John recurs in several places to images of fire and sweetness (*Totus dulcedine amoris tui plenus, totus flamma caritatis tuae vaporatus*, l. 927–28), but he does not express here, as Anselm does so powerfully, a desire to be with Jesus at the crucifixion and to share in his sufferings. Only at the end of the prayer does John mention the wounds of Christ, a theme to which we will return.

Some of John's language can be called moralizing, as in his contrast between the love of Christ and love of the world (*Amor mundi nox est et caligo*, l. 938). He desires to have no earthly or carnal desire but love Christ alone, thinking of him alone, desiring only him, having him alone in heart and mouth (*ut nihil terrenum aut carnale desiderem vel cogitem, sed te solum amem, te solum cogitem, te solum desiderem, te solum habeam in corde et in ore*, l. 946–48). The repetition of the formula *te solum* is an effective rhetorical device, especially if we think of the prayer as being said with the lips, as almost all medieval prayers, also private ones, must have been uttered. But there is nothing here of the concentrated energy of Anselm's address to Jesus: *Te sitio, te esurio, te desidero, ad te suspiro, te concupisco*.[17] In Sister Benedicta's translation: 'I thirst for you, I hunger for you, I desire you, I sigh for you, I covet you'.[18]

John is nevertheless able to bring his thoughts together at the end of this section, in expressing how all his hopes and yearnings are concentrated on Jesus: 'You alone are my effort and exultation, my joy and meditation. I meditate on you by day and speak with you in my sleep at night' (l. 948–50). This line is derivative of Psalm 1,2 (Blessed is he who meditates on the law of the Lord day and night), a reference that Leclercq and Bonnes apparently missed. But we are reminded of the monastic context: the private prayer that John expressed here is derivative especially of the Psalms and their direct appeal to a loving, caring God.

John returns again and again to the dual themes of fire and sweetness (*ut totus sicut flamma urens ardeam in tui amoris dulcedine*, l. 953–54). If we compare how Anselm expresses his need for Christ, he is briefer and more concrete: *Quid dicam, quid faciam? Quo vadam? Ubi eum quaeram? Ubi vel quando inveniam? Quem rogabo*?[19] He fires away questions, while John dwells on the sweetness he receives from Jesus and the fire of his love. He then requests the grace of tears (*gratiam lacrimarum*, l. 969) as a sign of Christ's love and 'solace in my exile' (*solatium peregrinationis meae*, l. 970). Instead of dwelling on the Passion of Christ, as Anselm does, John turns to the Psalms, the deer yearning for running streams (Ps. 41,2) and the fountain of life (35,10).[20]

At the end of this passage, however, John does evoke Christ's shedding of blood (*sacratissimam effusionem praetiosi sanguinis tui*, 976–78) but instead of naming the individual sufferings of Christ, such as the scourging and crowning of thorns,

[17] F. S. Schmitt (ed.), *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, vol. III (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1984), p. 7.
[18] Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations*, p. 94.
[19] Schmitt, *S. Anselmi*, pp. 9, l. 72–3.
[20] Citations here are to the Vulgate edition of the Bible, with the Psalms after 9 numbered one fewer than in modern editions.

as Anselm does, John keeps to the language of the Psalms: 'I bring my prayers and offerings to you, while I sing the psalmody of praise' (l. 979–80). The passage becomes more a theological exposition of the mystery of the Redemption, rather than an expression of devotion. The work is appropriately entitled a 'Theological Confession', for John is both confessing his attachment to Christ and explaining the Saviour's work of redemption.

At this point he considers the Eucharist and the benefits it brings. Anselm has his own prayer on the reception of the body and blood of Christ, but it is brief and contains little of the powerful sense of the wounded Jesus that is in his prayer to Christ.[21] So far as I can tell, the devotion to the Eucharist that became so central in medieval religion after the twelfth century hardly existed in this earlier period. But John of Fécamp at least indicates the beginning of this attachment to the sacrament. He calls it great and ineffable and asks for the grace of tears in his search for the presence of Christ. 'May my mind amid such great mysteries be confirmed in the sweetness of your presence, and may it sense that you are present and rejoice before you' (1011–12).[22]

Sweetness, fire and tears are the three fixed points to which John keeps returning: 'O fire which always gives light, love which always burns, sweet Christ, good Jesus, eternal and unending light' (1013). He dwells on the sacrament of the altar and its greatness: *O summum perfectum bonum . . . .* (1032). In the next section, however (29), he quotes at length from the Song of Songs, picking out passages that he brings together into a kind of florilegium. This is his practice earlier in the *Confessio*, and here the sensual language of the Song is suitable for expressing John's attachment to the Eucharist. It is not until the next section (30) that he reverts to his own composition, in asking for the life, hope and glory which only Christ can provide: *Tu vita qua vivo, spes cui inhaereo, gloria quam adipisci desidero, tu mihi cor tene, mentem rege, intellectum dirige* (1075–76).

The use of imperative forms of verbs recalls the powerful anselmian passage quoted above, but the verbs are not as personal in content as those we find in Anselm. John is asking the Lord for strength, but he formulates his request in terms of a desire for sweet smells and honeyed love. The passage is dripping with fragrance, a direction that Anselm would not take: *Descendat, Domine, descendat praecor, descendat in cor meum odor tuus suavissimus, amor tuus melifluus, tuique saporis illa mira et enenarrabilis fragrantia* (l. 1089–91). Let me taste and see, how sweet and gentle you are, a borrowing from Psalm 33, 8: *Gustate et videte, quam suavis est Dominus.* John asks towards the end of this passage for 'contrition of heart and a fountain of tears' (1117–18).

The structure of this long prayer is not very rigid. John circles around his desire for the presence of Christ and expresses it in various ways, such as in his longing for the Eucharist. I by no means find John's prayer to be without form, but it seems to

[21] Schmitt, *S. Anselmi*, vol. III, p. 10.

[22] Leclercq and Bonnes, *Jean de Fécamp*, p. 174: 'Confirmetur mens mea inter tanta mysteria dulcedine praesentiae tuae, sentiat te sibi adesse, et laetetur coram te'. The last phrase is taken from Isaiah 9,3. Lauren Mancia has helpfully pointed out to me (email of 7 June 2013) that John in his later *Confessio Fidei* does devote more attention to the Eucharist, perhaps a result of the challenge by Berengar of Tours in the 1150s.

be a product of monastic *lectio*, for it dwells on various biblical texts and sees what they bring in terms of associations. At this point he turns to an Old Testament story concerning Hannah and how she came to conceive Samuel (1 Sam. 1, 9–18). She had asked the Lord with many tears for a son. In her pain and sorrow John finds his own: *. . . dolore torqueor et verecundia confundor, quia ego miserrimus nil tale facio, qui non infima* (1127–28): 'I am tortured in sorrow and confounded with shame, because I the most wretched one can do nothing which is not base. . .' The otherwise confident spirituality which John seems to express in much of this work has its shadow side. His soul weeps in seeking God, as Hannah wept in her need for a child (1133–34).

The soul seeks the Lord lying in the sepulchre (1144–45). Here John goes beyond his usual terms of fire, sweetness and love and creates an image of Jesus the human person. We must all the days of our lives seek, venerate and love him, with tears and intense desire (1147–49). He has chosen not to develop the idea of Jesus in the tomb. Instead he reverts to a moralizing attitude: Gentlest Christ, he says, you resist the proud and give grace to the humble (James 4,6). May this wretched man listen and fear pride. He asks that humility and charity keep him from every form of arrogance and stubbornness (*omnem arrogantiam et contumaciam*, 1173–74). The list of vices sounds as though it was taken from the Rule of Saint Benedict or from an abbot's chapter talk. Prayer has turned into moralization.

John has reverted to a tale of conflict between good and evil. He addresses Christ as the one who 'represses the strength of adverse power, to whom no power can resist, give me the strength and ability to crush the lion and the dragon, the asp and the basilisk' (1201–4, cf. Ps. 90.13). He asks for the guardianship of the angels. He changes his images frequently, again probably a result of monastic *lectio*, turning over the language of the Bible and finding fresh associations. He speaks of his holocaust offering, 'often contaminated in the mud of many waters' (Hab. 3.15) and then asks to be washed and cleansed in the fountain of his tears (1210–12, cf. Ps. 50.9). He asks for mercy from the Lord, that through penance and the compunction of tears, he at the moment of death become as he was when the water of baptism regenerated him at the font (1212–15). The passage ends with a prayer whose tone and content are close to those of the Offertory of the Mass: *Suscipe preces servi tui, et fave votis meis. Da mihi gratiam istam, quam non possum nisi per tuam habere misericordiam* (Receive the prayers of your servant and favour my offerings. Give me that grace which I cannot have except through your mercy: 1216–18). But then comes an afterthought that could almost be called anselmian (in reference to the logic of the *Cur Deus Homo*), *Quis habet quicquam non tuum*? (l. 1219: 'For who has anything that is not yours?') All that we are comes from God; we owe him everything and can thus give him nothing.

John at this point might seem to have run out of ideas to convey his desire for divine assistance. He has spoken of love, tears, sweetness, contrition and hope. But now in the final 30 lines of the third section of the *Confessio*, he adds a new theme, the wounds of Christ. He starts with tears, which he says he greatly needs, but now he links his tears to gratefulness for 'those saving wounds which you suffered on the cross for our salvation' (*per illa salutifera vulnera quae passus es in cruce pro salute nostra*: l. 1227–28). From these wounds there came 'the precious and life-giving blood

by which we are redeemed'. He asks that his sinful soul be wounded: *vulnera hanc animam peccatricem* (l. 1234). He has thus used the word *vulnera* both as a plural noun and an imperative verb. He repeats the verb form: *vulnera eam igneo et potentissimo telo tuae nimiae caritatis* (1235–36: 'Wound it with the fiery and most potent weapon of your overpowering love').

As earlier, John in finding a phrase or expression that suits him repeats it time and again. He asks again that Christ 'wound this sinful soul and penetrate deeper into its furthest reaches' (1238–9: *et vulnera hanc animam peccatricem, atque altius penetra ad intima*). The last 15 lines summarize hope that the soul will be able to receive divine consolation and see the beloved as groom on the marriage bed; John has returned to the language of the Song of Songs. Here there will be the taste of heavenly exultation, so that it can say, 'Behold I now see what I have yearned for', words taken from the rite for the consecration of virgins.[23]

This section is followed by what is entitled a *recapitulatio*. It by no means sums up the three sections, but it does give a final commentary on what are called 'types of contemplation by which a devout soul delights and profits in you, Christ' (l.1259–60: . . . *contemplationum genera, quibus anima tibi, Christe, devote delectatur et proficit*). The soul seeks to remove itself from everything else so that it can rejoice in God alone (1261–62), an indication of a theme about the solitary life that appears elsewhere in John's writings.[24] In this state, the tumult of thoughts ceases, the weight of mortality and our wretched habits do not oppress (1264–66). The heart burns, the mind rejoices, the memory flourishes and the intellect is full of light 1269: *Cor ardet, animus gaudet, memoria viget, intellectus lucet*.[25] The line is reminiscent of Augustine's *Confessions*, but in the vision of Christ's beauty, seized in the love of what is visible, there is a hidden reference to the Preface for Christmas (1270–71: *et totus spiritus ex desiderio visionios pulchritudinis tuae accensus, 'in invisibilium amorem rapi' se videt*).

The last lines of the recapitulation take on a solemn, formal tone which more reflects liturgical prayer than the personal appeal to God that otherwise characterizes much of the *Confessio*. John asks that God 'look upon with serene countenance' the gift he offers, taking words directly from the prayer *Supra quae* in the Canon of the Mass.[26] John declares that he has nothing outside of himself which he can offer as a gift to Christ, and so he gives 'that which is in me as offerings of praise from the gift of your mercy' (1299–1300). The prayer closes with formulae such as *Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi gratiarum actio* (1304). The personal prayer has become liturgical and so leaves behind its earlier tone of intimacy. John has shown a desire to be alone with God and declared his unworthiness, but his work ends in a theological statement expressing the greatness of God. His prayer is rightly entitled a theological confession, for like Augustine John interweaves his belief and need for God with a description of how he offers himself totally in a growing awareness of divine power and might.

[23] Leclercq and Bonnes, *Jean de Fécamp*, p. 181, note 8.
[24] See the *Deploratio quietis et solitudinis derelictae* in Leclercq and Bonnes, *Jean de Fécamp*, pp. 185–97.
[25] Bernard McGinn has some fine comments in using this passage in John as an expression of monastic contemplation and showing 'burning desire for heaven'. See *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), p. 140.
[26] 'Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris . . . .'

Anselm's prayer to Jesus

Anselm starts his prayer with theological considerations that to some extent provide a parallel with John's text. The first lines describe how the sinner seeks to pay Christ a debt that weighs on him, a thought that will again appear in the *Cur Deus Homo*. In Sister Benedicta's translation: '. . . my soul will pay its debt by some sort of praise and thanks, not as I know I ought but as I can'.[27] Anselm then provides a number of epithets to describe what Christ means for him: *spes cordis mei, virtus animae meae, auxilium infirmitatis meae*.[28] Such benevolent descriptions of Christ's effect on the sinner are close to the approach John uses, as in his *accende me totum igne tuo, amore tuo, dilectione tua, desiderio tuo, caritate tua, iucunditate et exultatione tua* (l. 923–5). The difference is that Anselm limits himself to three terms, while John carries on through many more. The rhetorical strategy of piling one word on top of another is John's way of getting close to his object, while Anselm is generally more restrained.

Anselm then provides an opposition that we do not find in the same manner in John: 'although I have not yet attained to love you as I ought, still let my desire for you be as great as my love ought to be'.[29] The verbs here speak of merit and obligation (*merui te . . . debeo amare*). Anselm contrasts what the sinner owes God with what he can give God. He is constructing a language of logical affectivity, and his argument is far tighter than John's, which as I have already pointed out, reflects the process of monastic *lectio*, careful meditation over texts that can go in many different directions.

The tone of the first paragraphs of Anselm's prayer, however, is not far from John's approach, as when he asks Christ to convert his coolness into the most fervent love: *Converte, misericordissime, meum teporem in ferventissimum tui amorem* (line 21). While John at this point would begin to describe the tears he shed, Anselm emphasizes the theological balance that Christ's intervention has created in cleansing the soul: *Expectas tu, bone domine, meam correctionem; expectat anima mea ad sufficienter paenitendum, ad bene vivendum tuae gratiae inspirationem*.[30] The rhyme prose of the line is perfect, from *correctionem* to *paenitendum* and finally *inspirationem*. Everything is in measure and balance.

This confidence in the presence and assistance of Christ continues in the first line of the next paragraph: *Domine meus, creator meus, tolerator et nutritor meus, esto adiutor meus* (l. 30). Up until this point Anselm's prayer is close in tone to John's, but now comes what I consider a central anselmian turning point, an appeal to raw human emotion and need: *Te sitio, te esurio, te desidero, ad te suspiro, te concupisco* (31). John does not usually state in such bald terms his need for Christ, which Anselm conveys in turning to scenes of the Passion, how Jesus was beaten, scourged and crucified (l. 33–35). The phrase *memor vulnerum tuorum*, however, does demonstrate that John also dwells on the wounds of Christ, and so the distance between John and

[27] Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations*, p. 93. Schmitt, vol. III, pp. 6, l. 7–9: '. . . tamen, qualescumeque laudes, qualescumque gratias, non quales scio me debere, sed sicut potest conari, tibi persolvit anima'.

[28] Schmitt, vol. III, p. 6, l. 10–11.

[29] Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations*, p. 93.

[30] Schmitt, vol. III, p. 7, l. 26–8.

Anselm narrows at this point. Both of them weep at the sufferings of Jesus, but Anselm describes his situation in an intimate manner that John does not, for he is like an orphan deprived of the presence of a good father: *pupillus benignissimi patris orbatus praesentia, flens et eiulans* (l. 31).

Beyond the Passion Anselm looks forward to the coming of Christ and the glorious contemplation of his face. He balances this perception in his almost mathematical language: the Lord of angels has been humbled in his contact with men, so that men be exalted in the contact with angels. The phrases *conversationem hominum. . . conversationem angelorum* balance each other perfectly. The Redemption becomes an act of equalization, but it also is a physical event with which the sinner cannot cope: 'Why, O my soul, were you not there to be pierced by a word of bitter sorrow when you could not bear the piercing of the side of your Saviour with a lance?'[31] We hear of the nails, blood, bitter gall to drink: in every way possible, Anselm places himself in the presence of Christ's sufferings, with an immediacy that exceeds what is suggested in John.

At this point Anselm considers Mary, who wept when she saw her only son, 'bound, beaten and hurt'.[32] Anselm dwells on how she was physically present at the Passion, a theme that is not nearly as strong in John (842–51), who speaks of her as intercessor but without Anselm's familiar language. He imagines the fountains of tears that flowed from Mary's eyes when she saw her son stretched forth on the cross, and he hears the words 'Mother, behold your son'. Anselm's method is simple yet complex: he has used the biblical account but converted it into an event that is here and now and in which the human participants are fully and tragically engaged.

He then describes how Joseph of Arimathea laid Jesus in the tomb and imagines 'the blessed band of women'. With them 'I might have trembled at the vision of angels' and 'the news of the Lord's Resurrection'.[33] At this moment as in the earlier ones describing the events of the Passion, Anselm regrets that he was not present: '. . . will you not make it up to me for not seeing the blessed incorruption of your flesh, for not having kissed the place of the wounds where the nails pierced?'[34] This need to experience the wounded body of Christ approaches the last lines of John of Fécamp's *Confessio*, with its *vulnera*, but Anselm makes his involvement more physical and intimate than what John describes.

Anselm languishes for his Lord. He is an exile (*peregrinus*) 'far from my Lord' who has now ascended into heaven 'and you have not said farewell to me'.[35] He aches with need for the physical presence of Jesus. The more he considers the events of the Passion, the more he senses loss and separation from his God: 'What shall I say? What shall I do? Whither shall I go? Where shall I seek him? Where and when shall I find him?'[36] At this point Anselm makes use of passages from several of the Psalms to describe this

[31] Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 95.
[32] Ibid., p. 96.
[33] Ibid., p. 96.
[34] Ibid., p. 97.
[35] Ibid. Schmitt, vol. III, p. 9: 'Heu mihi, domine, heu animae meae ! recessisti, consolator vitae meae, nec valedixisti mihi'.
[36] Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 97. Schmitt, vol. III, p. 9: 'Quid dicam? Quid faciam? Quo vadam? Ubi eum quaeram? Ubi vel quando inveniam?'

pain, but then he summarizes them with his own brief and powerful verbs: *Te volo, te spero, te quaero*.[37] In this way the passage does not turn into a florilegium of psalmody: Anselm's voice issues forth in its anguish.

The last lines of the prayer provide hope for consolation in grief: 'Come now, Lord, appear to me and I will be consoled; show me your face and I shall be saved'.[38] Anselm uses the Psalms here to revert to the themes of hunger and thirst which will now be satisfied. He ends the prayer with his tears and the likelihood that 'my Redeemer will come to me, for he is good'. The tortured soul has found some hope, but there is no guarantee that Jesus will come. In John's Confession the consolation of the sacrament of the altar is included as an assurance of divine aid, while for Anselm the prayer that in the collection follows the one to Christ, 'Before Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ' emphasizes primarily the sinner's unworthiness. The key phrase in this process of approaching Christ is found towards the end of the prayer to Jesus: *Exhibe praesentiam tuam et consecutus ero desiderium meum* (Display your presence and I have obtained my desire).[39] The soul thirsts for the presence of the Saviour and cannot find rest until he manifests himself. We are back with Augustine's 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.'[40] Anselm has in fact taken the language of Augustine's Confessions and given it new immediacy and power.

John of Fécamp versus Anselm of Bec

Anselm was far more physical than John in remembering the events of the Passion and putting his soul into the centre of its drama. He is present, overwhelmed by pain, also in experiencing Mary's grief. The soul has been orphaned and seeks to find its father but is devastated in its loneliness. The entire prayer can be summed up in the desire for the presence of God.

John also expressed pain but conveys it in terms of his tears, a theme to which he frequently returns. His exposition of the sufferings of Christ is not nearly as graphic and detailed as Anselm's. He more easily finds comfort, as in expressing his love for Jesus as a fire kindled in him. Only towards the end of the Confession do the wounds of Christ appear and make more physical what otherwise has been implied.[41] But Jesus is perceived mainly through the language of the Mass, the Psalms and the Song of Songs. Certainly these are powerful vehicles for human emotion and spiritual yearning, but they are, as I already have indicated, a symptom of monastic reading, *lectio*, the close meditation on texts that can combine them in surprising ways, but far from Anselm's direct and almost brutal experience of the sufferings of Christ.

[37] Schmitt, vol. III, p. 9.
[38] Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 98.
[39] Ibid., p. 98. Schmitt, vol. III, p. 9.
[40] *Confessions I.1:* '. . . quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te'.
[41] Again I am indebted to Lauren Mancia's commentary to this article. She has pointed out to me that there are other passages in the *Confessio theologica* where John considers the physical sufferings of Christ, but not with the same physical intensity as in Anselm. See Leclercq and Bonnes, pp. 140 and 142.

Did Anselm make use of John? Certainly the *Confessio theologica* could have opened up for Anselm the possibility of meditation on the wounds of Christ, something that Anselm developed much further. Anselm formulated his own approach to prayer, direct and powerful, but he like John took as his primary inspiration the biblical language that was part and parcel of his everyday life in choir. John expressed a yearning for the presence of God. So did Anselm, but he pushed language further and created a new and revolutionary language of personal prayer.

Southern seems to have reconsidered this question, as he did with much else in Anselm's life and thought, in his second Anselm biography. Here he spoke of John of Fécamp's prayers in a more favourable manner than he did in 1963. In them he found 'a gentle and refined piety, a confidence in the saving grace of Christ, a mild rejection of the world, and a fervent desire for progress in devotion'.[42] These lines capture the calm side of John, but there is a more intense one latent in his text, which Anselm may have developed.

Here we can do no better than to turn to the conclusion of Jean Leclercq and Jean-Paul Bonnes: 'John of Fécamp is a precursor: he is not just derivative, he is a source on whom, more or less consciously, will depend those who after him will be inspired by his writings and will pray his texts'.[43] This evaluation my comparison of the two texts has managed to confirm, even though I have been unable to detect clear verbal borrowings. It seems, nevertheless, likely that the abbot of Fécamp provided a point of departure for Anselm's new language of prayer. In this context it is significant that John's prayers were often placed together with Anselm's in later collections, a point made by several scholars, including Rachel Fulton.[44] Thus later readers of medieval prayers associated John and Anselm and took it for granted that they belonged to the same tradition.[45]

Anselm deserves to be seen not as a lonely giant but as a representative of a renewal of Christian thought and spirituality. Southern's rejection of John as a source for Anselm may have been a response to André Wilmart's claim that 'between Saint Gregory and Saint Bernard, no one in the Middle Ages has been carried towards the summits of the mystical life with greater conviction than this forgotten monk'.[46] Wilmart left out Anselm and so it was up to F. S. Schmitt in his edition and Southern in his 1963 biography to grant him his rightful place between Gregory and Bernard.

Southern may have gone to the other extreme from Wilmart in minimizing John's contribution to a new language of prayer. He was fascinated with Anselm as the representative of a heartfelt and intensely personal spirituality. Southern saw

[42] Southern, *Saint Anselm. A Portrait*, p. 92.

[43] Leclercq and Bonnes, *Un maître*, p. 89: '. . . Jean de Fécamp est un précurseur: il n'est pas seulement un dérivé, il est une source dont, plus ou moins consciemment, dépendront ceux qui, après lu, s'inspireront de ses écrits et prieront sur ses textes.

[44] Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 146–50, 189–91.

[45] Again I am in debt to Lauren Mancia for making this observation.

[46] Wilmart, *Revue d'ascetique* (note 6 above), pp. 6–7: 'Entre saint Grégoire et saint Bernard, personne au moyen âge, que je sache, ne s'est porté vers les sommets de la vie mystique avec plus de conviction que ce moine oublié'.

in Anselm a revolution of sentiment which, as I indicated above, had transformed Christian spirituality and given his own life new meaning. So radical an alteration does not come about by itself but has to be built on a solid foundation. In Southern's case, the Anglican world of his childhood, with its prayers and liturgies, must have been a point of departure for what came afterwards. In Anselm's case, his own troubled childhood and youth found their resolution at monastic Bec. Here he is likely to have met John of Fécamp's *Confessio theologica*. With its yearning for Jesus and tears shed at the sight of his wounds, John provided a foundation for what it is that made Anselm an innovator and even a revolutionary in the spiritual life.

11

'Minds Wandering' and 'Monastic Stability' in the Early Monastic Letters of Anselm of Bec

G. R. Evans

Monastic correspondence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries survives only patchily. Letters between monks are, therefore, a phenomenon of some interest, especially when they are as personal in character as some of the letters Anselm wrote in the period about 1071–87, before he became Archbishop of Canterbury in succession to Lanfranc. Here the quality of the spiritual life which would have been shared within the community at Bec may be glimpsed.

Much has been written on monastic friendship. Alcuin comments in a letter to Adalhard of Corbie on the deep mystery of such friendship, which is to be regarded as a gift of God.[1] R. W. Southern explored the character and assumptions of the friendships of Anselm at some length in the second of his studies of Anselm's life. He sees them broadly as implying a bond of 'common purpose'.[2] Ailred of Rievaulx's treatise on spiritual friendship, with its emphasis on the presence of Christ in monastic friendship, offers a Cistercian point of comparison from the next generation after Anselm.[3] The problem all these interpretations had to address is that special friendships are traditionally, and for good reason, to be avoided in monastic life. Anselm's monastic letters hint at some particular affections yet as we shall see, he is generally careful to ensure that any message of particular intimacy is shared with others.

Perhaps the most important feature of the monastic letters of Anselm, for the purposes of the present paper, is that his friendships formed at Bec were tested by the removal of some of those closest to him when Lanfranc left first for Caen and then for Canterbury. That is why we have the letters. But by the same token, these are letters to others outside the Bec community, and some to individuals who were never part of it.[4]

[1] Douglas Dales, *Alcuin: Theology and Thought* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013), Chapter 25, discusses Alcuin's theology of monastic friendship and notes this letter at p. 244.

[2] See R. W. Southern, *Anselm, A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 138–47. Southern approaches the question through Cassian, *Collationes,* xvi, *De amicitia*, ed. Petchenig, CSEL, 13 (1886), pp. 437–62 and the bond of common purpose.

[3] See the opening of Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, *Opera Omnia*, eds. A. Hoste and C. H. Talbot, *CCCM*, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971).

[4] See R. W. Southern, *Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 202 on Anselm's circle of friends.

An 'art' of monastic letter-writing?

These letters need to be considered first as literary artefacts. They were written during the period when the *ars dictaminis* was emerging as an innovative rhetorical art. The spread of this *ars* which was currently being developed for the training of clerks in the 'business school' of Bologna and elsewhere owed much to demand for competent secretaries in a world where politics both ecclesiastical and secular increasingly required a civil service in support.[5] It is difficult to identify in Anselm's letter-writing a direct debt to the technical specifics of this notarial 'art'. But he was the recipient of letters as well as a letter-writer and he was a conscious stylist. It is unlikely that he was unaware that monastic letters, where they had a spiritual purpose, must also have their conventions, their restraints, their stylistic proprieties. Alberic of Monte Cassino (d.1088), author of one of the first treatises on the subject of letter-writing, was a Benedictine monk and a correspondent of Peter Damien, so the 'art' of letter-writing had monastic as well as business roots.

The conventions Alberic helped to establish included the socially appropriate and etiquette-sensitive use of salutations, the form of the letter, and the expectation that attention would be paid to cadence and the use of the *cursus*.[6] The form was to be based on the broad outlines of a classical speech, adapted for the purposes of the letter. There must be a greeting in which the writer positioned himself correctly in the hierarchy in relation to the recipient. For monastic purposes this was complicated by the expectation that the writer would express humility and often play with the topos of unworthiness. A certain competitive humility, as required by courtesy, is noticeable in Letter 3 to Robert, where Anselm compares Robert's energetic progress with his own lax slowness.[7] Anselm's protestations of unworthiness may be sincere; they are also conventional.

Anselm certainly took seriously the expectation that his salutations would reflect the etiquette of 'relative standing' expectation. He congratulates Lanfranc on his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury (August 1070) positioning himself a mere brother, after his lord and father:

> *suo domino et suo patri . . . Lanfranco: frater Anselmus suus totus.* [8]

Gundulf had once wept over Anselm's words as he taught the monks of Bec, even the *rustici*, to be 'seeming-philosophers'.[9] Gundulf's biographer reports the edifying spectacle of Anselm sowing seeds with his words and Gundulf, moved to tears, weeping so as to water them.[10] When he became Bishop of Rochester (1077), Anselm wrote to

[5] *Ars dictaminis, Ars dictandi*, ed. Martin Camargo, *Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental*, 60 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991).

[6] On Lanfranc's use of such formalities, see T. Janson, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the Ninth to the Thirteenth century* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1975), p. 42, p. 109.

[7] Letter 3, S I, p. 97. All quotations from Anselm's works in this chapter are taken from the standard critical edition, *Opera omnia S. Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1946–61), abbreviated in this chapter as 'S'.

[8] Letter 1, S I, p. 97.

[9] *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, IV.ii.246, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–80), 6 vols., Vol. II, pp.296–7.

[10] *The Life of Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester,* trans. R. Thomson (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1977).

congratulate him with a greeting in which the *tu* of earlier letters has become *vos*. The *Domino reverendo, fratri carissimo, amico certissimo,* with which Anselm greets Gundulf in Letter 4,[11] has become in Letter 78 *Olim dilectissimo fratri, nunc dulcissimo patri.*[12] The etiquette was sufficiently established to make room for it to be played with in a little jesting irony. In Letter 57, to Lanfranc, Anselm complains that he never gets a letter except one puzzlingly addressed to his Lord and Father – and by initial only – not his Servant and Son. He adds a little logical joke.[13]

After the salutation should come the *captatio benevolentiae.* This was a convention of classical rhetoric. Cicero's advice in *the De Oratore* is that before the speaker begins on the substance of what he has to say, it is important to win the goodwill of the minds of those who are to hear it:

antequam de re diceremus, initio conciliandos eorum esse animos, qui audirent.[14]

Then should come the statement of the purpose of the letter, the detail and a conclusion summing up what has been said. This actual business should be left to the messenger to explain, as we shall see happening in some of Anselm's own letters.

It would be forcing the interpretation of the early Anselm letters to try to cram them altogether into this mould, for Anselm the stylist was more than capable of playing with a genre. But it is worth bearing in mind that when Anselm wrote a letter of monastic friendship he had a shadowy form in mind if not an item in a formulary.

Opportunities to send letters: Carriers

The relationships formed by Anselm with the departed Bec monks were no doubt kept alive in part by the opportunities to write letters provided by the occasional passing backwards and forwards of messengers between Bec and Canterbury, of which they offer some glimpses. The sentiments in the letters can rarely have been spontaneous in the sense of being prompted by a simple urge to write to an absent friend. Unless their subject matter was sufficiently important to make it necessary to send a messenger, they were written when there was an opportunity to send them. That sometimes made them urgent, written in a hurry when the chance arose. Hasty notes because the bearer is waiting are exemplified by Letter 47 to Maurice.

Herluin carried letters 4 and 5. This Herluin (not Bec's founder-abbot) was a Caen monk who had gone to Canterbury with Lanfranc, and became Abbot of Glastonbury in 1100. Robert was regarded as a reliable carrier. He carried letter 14,[15] in which he was trusted to explain to Lanfranc what Anselm has done about the problem of Girard, mint-master of Arras, former Bec monk, who has got into debt.

[11] S III. 104.
[12] S III. 200.
[13] *Cur quod destruere non potestis per oppositam negationem, subvertere tentatis per relativam oppositionem*, S III. 171–2.
[14] Cicero, *De Oratore,* I.xxxi. 143.
[15] See too Letters 7, 30, 74.

Lanfranc had apparently been asked to see what he could do, at least to ensure that his debts do not grow. As in this instance, the messenger is often entrusted with the detail of what needs to be said and the letter may be no more than an introductory note for him to carry. So although it may say much that is important it will not necessarily say it all.

Travel was dangerous, so dangerous that unacceptable risk could interrupt this fragile postal system. Letter 55 was written to cousin Folcerald who had visited Anselm at Bec and wanted to become a monk (but did not succeed till Letter 209). Dom Ralph had taken him back but had been captured with his whole household in the archdiocese of Rheims and had his horses stolen though he had the Archbishop's safe passage. He was held captive and eventually released with almost no horses returned. In such dangerous times, Anselm dares not travel to see Folcerald. Although he was evidently able to send this letter, he cannot send a copy of the *Prayers* which he has had made for him because the bearer of this letter is afraid to carry them in case they get stolen.

Recipients of Anselm's monastic correspondence and questions of stability

When an eleventh- or twelfth-century monk wrote a letter he mentally 'left his house' and 'wandered' in his written communication with a friend or acquaintance. These epistolary 'breaches of stability' might involve no more than official or business letters, dealing with the management of a house and its lands or crises in ecclesiastical or secular politics. Anselm's letters had more to say about that sort of thing once he became Abbot of Bec, when Letters 89–90 to Lanfranc concern the Bec properties and money. But Anselm's early letters hint at enduring friendships among monks from Bec forced by circumstances to live a long way apart and meeting only rarely over the years, if at all.

These letters were written in the Benedictine tradition but also in a monastic society in flux, where conventions were changing, experiments were being tried and the social order was proving sometimes surprisingly fluid when it came to arranging the life of the house, apportioning offices and responsibilities. Nevertheless, this correspondence is in some respects special to Bec and its connections, involving a close circle of monks and their friends and relations. (Anselm wrote warmly in Letter 120 to two young relatives he had never met.)

It is worth pausing briefly to consider by way of comparison some of the letters Anselm wrote to women and relatives in the years of his more intimate correspondence with friends who were monks of the Bec community, but from whom he was separated. His close friendships were with monks only. He writes to or about women only because of some particular circumstance or family connection. Letter 98 to the monks of Bec mentions Eva whose eldest son is one of them. In Letter 147 to Prior Baldric and the monks at Bec, he greets 'mother Eva and Mother Basilia'. Eva was mother of Gilbert Crispin and Basilia was wife of Hugh de Gournay. These were letters to his extended 'family' which included the families of his friends.

But the primacy of the monastic vocation is always central. He wrote letter 17 to the monk Henry to dissuade him from leaving Bec to go to Italy to defend his sister who is said to have been *servituti calumniose subicere* by a rich man. He has fled the world, writes Anselm. He should not be entangling himself in its affairs. Letter 86 is to Adelaide, widow of Baldwin V Count of Flanders about a would-be monk who, in old age, wants to give up the military life so that he may spend the little that remains of his life as a monk:[16]

> *Iam enim grandaevus et fractae aetatis homo vult dimittere militam, immo malitiam.*

She can help by persuading her son to forgive him his debts. Letter 134 was written to Ermengard, whose husband also wishes to become a monk, asking her to give her permission.

To Adelaide, daughter of William the Conqueror, who became a nun, he sent Letter 10, to accompany copies of his *Prayers* and the 'flowers of the Psalms' which she had asked for. He gives her general advice on her new life. However, Anselm suggests in a letter to Gundulf (28), that they were really written for him. To Gundulf, as to Matilda, a recipient of the full collection, he writes that the prayers are divided into paragraphs so he can begin where he pleases.[17]

Anselm's biographer Eadmer had always been at Canterbury as a monk from a baby. He did not meet Anselm till 1079 when he was 19 and Anselm, then 46, had just been made Abbot of Bec. Anselm was in England visiting the Bec estates when they met. They did not meet again until 1092 a year before Anselm became Archbishop. So Eadmer's *Life* cannot give as satisfactory an account of the life of the early years at Bec as it might have done if the author had been an eyewitness and shared the experience. The evidence of the letters about the character of the friendships formed in that community is the more valuable for this reason.

Anselm had entered Bec when Lanfranc was its Prior and while it was attracting students from a wide area to the school he had run there from the mid-1040s. These aspirant learners included Anselm himself.[18] Lanfranc was an experienced lecturer, having taught in the cathedral school at Avranches before he became a monk at Bec and he evidently won a loyal as well as a numerous following. He was thought to teach the *trivium* exceptionally well and he applied the skills enhanced by that study to the study of Scripture. Copies of his commentaries on the Pauline Epistles continued to be requested.[19]

The unusual circumstances creating a dispersed circle of Bec monks began when Lanfranc was made the first Abbot of St Stephen's Caen in 1063. He took with him some of the young Bec monks of whom the letters suggest Anselm was especially fond. Anselm succeeded him as Prior of Bec. In 1070, Lanfranc was made Archbishop of Canterbury and left for England, still accompanied by former Bec monks.

[16] S III. 211.
[17] See Benedicta Ward, *Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 61.
[18] Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi,* I. v, ed. R. W. Southern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 8–9.
[19] Letter 66.

When Lanfranc departed, Anselm apparently took over full responsibility for the teaching at Bec, though under him the school seems to have changed its character. Anselm said more than once that he found it tedious to teach the elements of the liberal arts, particularly grammar.[20] Instead, as a respected 'sophist' he held theological 'seminars' for the monks and probably others. Orderic Vitalis reports that 'clergy and laity' took part.[21]

These colloquies were not purely intellectual exercises. For Anselm they were a means of teaching spirituality, too, as the form he adopted for his *Proslogion* illustrates. Those chapters intended to uplift spiritual awareness precede and follow chapters containing terse rational argumentation.[22]

In 1078 Herluin, Bec's founder-abbot, died and Anselm was chosen to be Abbot of Bec. When his duties meant he could no longer act as principal or only teacher for the Bec school, Anselm's successor as schoolmaster was apparently Wido.[23] William and Boso are mentioned in this role by Orderic Vitalis. They had been taught by him and tried to carry on the tradition he had established.[24] At the request of the monks who had heard him talk, who seem to have formed a group of his loyal friends, Anselm had slowly begun to write what became a series of treatises, beginning with the *Monologion*, about 1076–77. Boso became the companion in the fictional dialogue which takes place in the *Cur Deus Homo*.

Is there any indication that there emerged a 'Lanfranc party' and an 'Anselm party'? Anselm's letters consistently encourage those Lanfranc has chosen to keep with him to bear the resulting separation patiently and remember their duty of obedience to Lanfranc. But there were clearly tensions and even perhaps some playing off of Anselm against Lanfranc.[25] There were also further changing 'status' relationships over time in these longstanding monastic friendships, as when Gundulf became Bishop of Rochester or Anselm himself became Abbot of Bec.

The history of a community broken up, but with members continuing to feel and act as though they all belonged together, means that the letters of Anselm to members of this scattered community offer unusual insights into the attitudes to friendship and unity which were thought appropriate among monks in this period. Other scattered 'friends' appear in the correspondence, as parties were sent to establish dependent communities and individuals moved. There are also letters to blood relations and other 'family' letters. Even if the creation of this dispersed community was a rarity in quite the way which happened when Lanfranc took chosen monks away with him, these former Bec monks were not unusual in failing to remain in the house where they were professed. It is possible to trace a good deal of moving from place to place in the contemporary monastic world, including appointments, sometimes instigated by secular patrons, to the office of abbot in a different monastery.

[20] Letters 19, 20.
[21] Orderic Vitalis says that *ad consilium probatissimi sophistiae clerici et laici concurrebant*, *Ecclesiastical History,* IV, ii.245, ed. Chibnall, Vol. II, pp. 294–5.
[22] Compare *Proslogion* Chapter 1 with Chapters 2–4, S 1.
[23] Letter 39.
[24] Orderic, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, ii.245, ed. Chibnall, Vol. II, pp. 296–7.
[25] See Miles Crispin's (early twelfth century) *Vita Lanfranci*, PL 150.29-39.

Yet Anselm wrote one of his most important letters on the monastic life to discourage such roaming.[26] Letter 37 to Lanzo, by now a novice at Cluny, was apparently written at the prompting of Lord Ursus, a mutual friend. The result is almost an Anselmian 'Screwtape Letter'.[27] Beware of Satan when he is not attacking but 'advising' you, Anselm warns. He may encourage you to think that although you are secure in your vocation, you are feeling discontent because you have chosen to join the wrong community; that it is your superiors, or your companions, who are the problem. Do not be fooled. You must not be led into plans to move or resentments against your companions. You will never grow strong roots in the monastic life if you keep digging yourself up by moving. You must work to grow roots of love wherever you find yourself. Unless there is a culture in the house which requires you to do actual evil or wrong you should not judge the behaviour of others or the customs of the house. Just get on with living your own spiritual life.[28]

In your monastery you have a haven of peace, says Anselm in this letter. Do not bring the hurricane blowing in the world you have left inside your new life, for it will disrupt your peace. The same contrast of peace with disturbance appears in his argument for stability in Letter 117. This was written to the young William, begging him not to go off to Jerusalem to support his crusader brother, but to remain at Bec as a monk. Think, Anselm says, of the difficulties and discomforts of the journey, the restless seas and the confusions of warfare which you will endure to see your brother:

> *Per tot et tantas itinerum difficiles asperitates, per marium turbines and tempests, in bellicosam confusionem curris ad fratrem tuum, ut videas eum.*

Loving forgiveness of errant monks

Anselm was characteristically kindly and forgiving to monks who had wandered and wanted to come back, especially perhaps those who had wandered only between Bec and Canterbury. To Henry the Prior and the other monks at Canterbury, he writes to intercede for a fugitive monk called Moses, at present at Bec, who wants to return to the Canterbury community. He had, pleads Anselm, been led astray by his youth and the deceiving words of others: *sua iuvenili levitate et aliena deceptus fraude deseruit*. Anselm asks Canterbury to 'look on him as though he was clothed in my skin' and have him back.[29] Letter 141 to Gundulf (who was in administrative charge of Christ Church, Canterbury while it waited for the appointment of Lanfranc's successor as Archbishop) asks him to send reassurance that Moses will be received if he comes, before Anselm sends him. [30]

[26] The letter was copied into Eadmer's *Life*, I.xx, ed. Southern, pp. 32–4.
[27] Cf. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (London: HarperCollins, 2001).
[28] This letter is copied out in Eadmer, *Life,* I,xx, ed. Southern, p. 54 and is mentioned in Letter 335, with the suggestion that Warner, a monk at Canterbury, should read it.
[29] Letter 140, p. 285,
[30] p. 287?

However, this probably needs to be set in the context of Anselm's general approach to dealing with monks who had got themselves into trouble. It is not specific to the cases where the offence had been a breach of stability. Even before he had formal pastoral responsibilities Anselm was encouraging his correspondents to work towards reconciliation wherever they could but to avoid continuing conflict and controversy. Letter 6 was written to Hugh the Prior who is finding it difficult to work with his abbot. Hugh had written to Anselm, wanting to leave, tells him to remember his vow of obedience unless he is told to do wrong. If he cannot work with the abbot, Anselm says, he should ask to be relieved of his duties as Prior.

In letter 59 Salvius is being forgiven for some fault and Anselm takes the opportunity to mention that Osbern[31] is not confident he has been forgiven for a fault of his own so Henry is requested to make sure he knows he is indeed forgiven. The cluster of young monks Lanfranc had entrusted to Bec included his own nephew Lanfranc, Wido and this Osbern. In Letter 66, about 1076, Osbern is being sent back to Canterbury at Lanfranc's request (*auctoritas vestra iubet*). Anselm praises him and Lanfranc the nephew for their good progress in the monastic life. Letter 67 is written to Canterbury's Prior Henry about the return of Osbern to say that Osbern is a reformed character and should be encouraged in his new way of life. However, Osbern was suffering the symptoms of serious possibly stress-related illness and by Letter 87, we learn that Osbern has died.

Young Lanfranc and Wido were the recipients of a letter from Lanfranc which is Letter 31 in the collection. Lanfranc the uncle recognizes that Lanfranc the nephew and Wido have been great friends in the world (*vos dilexistis in seculo*) and he encourages them now to pray that God may teach them to love one another in him. They should set one another an example. At this stage, Lanfranc was causing his uncle a good deal of annoyance by his behaviour. He had told Lanfranc not to read any lesson in the community during his first year. He had ignored this instruction and coaxed Anselm to allow it.[32] He tells his nephew that it is only at Anselm's intercession that he forgives what Lanfranc has done. He warns him that the more he loves someone the fiercer his anger will be at even a small fault.[33]

The inner circle and the understandings on which monks left Bec and stayed away

Anselm's early letters, those written before he became Archbishop, include a high proportion written to those former monks of Bec, who had apparently left with Lanfranc when he went to Caen and remained with him when he went on to Canterbury. To whom did they owe obedience? The vow of obedience taken by a Benedictine monk at his profession includes an expectation of submission to the abbot as office-holder but not to a particular person as abbot, for the abbot may change. The monk takes

[31] See too Letter 39.
[32] Letter 31.
[33] S III. 139.

no fresh vow when a new abbot takes office; the vow of obedience at profession is once and for all. Yet a requirement of personal obedience to 'our father Lanfranc' is mentioned by Anselm in these letters to former Bec monks at the time when Lanfranc was Archbishop.[34]

Was this thought of as obedience to him in that capacity or as their monastic superior? The household of the Archbishop at Canterbury had become a community of Benedictines in the tenth century and so it now formed an abbey in its own right. However, Lanfranc as Archbishop was head of that community in a role ecclesiologically more complex than that of an ordinary abbot. It is not always clear whether Anselm's insistence on obedience to Lanfranc when former Bec monks prove restless derives from his sense of their duty to him as Archbishop or from principles of monastic obedience.

Eadmer mentions Anselm's special care for the young and 'beginner' monks because he saw that they could best be formed by gentleness and encouragement tempered with firmness. His favourite image was that of a piece of wax, which will take an impression best if it is not too hard or too soft.[35] Eadmer writes of the death of young Osbern, who had been professed close to time of young Lanfranc about 1070/1. Osbern had many skills but could be difficult, and he passionately hated Anselm (*odium . . . contra Anselmum*). Anselm won him round by kindness till he began to love him and Anselm then showed him special affection (*prae ceteris eum familiariter amplectitur*) but indulged him less and less so that he could grow more mature in the spiritual life. Then Osbern died, but he appeared in a vision to tell Anselm he was saved.[36] Anselm later wrote to Osbern's mother to say that she is to take him as her own son (Letter 11).

This pastoral effort seems to have resulted in personal closeness and some lasting special affections in other instances too. Of those with whom Anselm maintained intermittent correspondence included Maurice (who seems to have been a particular favourite)[37] and Henry. These two were the recipients of two of the earliest letters, written in an effusive language of love, especially the one to Maurice. Yet the two are carefully told to exchange the letters because what is written to each is also written to the other.[38]

What is to be made of the extreme language in which Anselm sometimes expresses his affection for his monastic correspondents? Anselm writing to Maurice, *anima dilectissima animae meae*,[39] and Henry (just *dilectissime*),[40] in the to-be-exchanged letters 4 and 5, says to Maurice (Letter 4) 'wherever you go, my love follows you; and wherever I find myself my love embraces you'.[41] The shared character of this love proved fundamental. Henry became Prior at Canterbury 1076/77, and in Letter 58, Anselm writes in business-like terms to thank him for a gift of money (gold) sent to Bec from Canterbury and for being kind to Maurice. This kindness Anselm takes to

[34] Letters 40–43 on obedience to 'our father Lanfranc'.
[35] Eadmer, *Life*, I.xi, ed. Southern, p. 20.
[36] Eadmer, *Life*, I,x, ed. Southern, pp. 16–8.
[37] Letter 79.
[38] Also letter 7 to Gundulf and Letters 50 to Henry, 51 to Gundulf, Herluin, Maurice.
[39] Letter 4, S III.104.
[40] Letter 5, S III.106.
[41] Letter 4, S III.104.

be a token of love to himself. Henry has written to Salvius monk of Bec, and Anselm has read the letter and embraces Salvius with his love because he is loved by Henry and Gundulf:

> *Cum eum amem propter deum et propter se ipsum, et quia confitetur se amicum esse domini Gundulfi: adhuc crescat amor, quia est dilectus domni prioris Henrici.*

Maurice is named in Letter 72 as the monk who asked Anselm to write the *Monologion*, and it was to Maurice that Anselm wrote when he was impatient to know what Lanfranc thought of it.

Gundulf[42] seems to have been another of this inner circle. To Gundulf, Anselm writes Letter 16, which is a thank you letter for some gifts. Anselm mentions that he had trusted Osbern (Letter 4) and Herluin (Letter 7) to Gundulf's care and asks to be remembered to them. In the slightly less effusive Letter 59, Anselm is quite brisk in his salutation: *fratri frater, amico amicus, dilecto dilectus*. Apparently Gundulf had been writing to ask for a letter. Here it is, though Gundulf knows full well that the letter will contain nothing but a restatement of their mutual affection. All that it can achieve is to put on paper what is already written in their hearts. And that must amount to less than what each feels within.

An older monastic friend of Anselm's, in whose formation he did not have the same role, was Gilbert Crispin. He had been at Bec before Anselm arrived there. He had gone to Canterbury at Lanfranc's request. He seems to have been a close friend of Anselm's, though Anselm does not write to him in quite the extreme language he uses for Maurice and Henry. In Letter 84, he writes that he misses him in their separation (*scissura*) and longs to see him personally.[43] In Letter 103, Gilbert seems to have been back at Bec, for Anselm writes to Lanfranc because he has to send Gilbert to England to take up his appointment as Abbot of Westminster. He is anxious that this may not mean a permanent departure from the Bec community, where Gilbert's presence is much needed. Nevertheless, in Letter 106, after a delay caused by some illness (*aegritudo*) Anselm is writing to Gilbert himself, to congratulate him on his new post at Westminster, for it is to be regarded as a gift of divine grace. Gilbert, he suggests, is his superior in spiritual matters because Gilbert has always lived the monastic life from infancy (*vita . . . in sancta conversatione nutrita*) whereas Anselm grew up in the world and his *vita olim est in saeculari conversatione detrita.* That makes Gilbert better fitted for his pastoral role as abbot (*pastor animarum*) than Anselm could ever be.[44] Indeed Gilbert does seem to have been especially good at looking after the spiritual welfare of young monks. Lanfranc wrote to him as an old friend to thank him for the excellent work he seems to be doing with the brothers Lanfranc sent him to teach: *litteris edocendos bonisque moribus instruendo*s. Will he do the same for young Lanfranc, he asks?[45]

[42] Orderic says that before he became Bishop of Rochester, about 1056, Gundulf went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Thierry of Saint-Evroul, who was miserably convinced he could not run his own house because of the insubordination of the monks. William Bonne-Âme went with them. Orderic, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.ii.63–4, ed. Chibnall, II, pp. 68–9.

[43] S. III. 208–9.

[44] S. III. 239.

[45] Lanfranc, *Letters*, 20, ed. and trans. Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 100–3.

Odo and Lanzo were recipients of the long Letter 2, which provides a convenient comparison with such strictly internal monastic letters. At the time they were probably laymen though Lanzo later became a monk at Cluny and later still Prior of Lewes. It seems that Anselm may have met them because he says Lanzo had prayed earnestly for the letter he is writing (*multis . . . precibus postulasse*); those 'prayers' could of course have been written. Lanzo had asked for a letter of spiritual guidance so that he might live better (*bene vivendi fervorem multis meum precibus postulasse teporem*). Anselm's advice is to be vigilant, never to relax in confident reliance on past achievements, never to be confident of being one of the few who will be chosen. The letter is designed to encourage Odo and Lanzo in what seems the beginning of a vocation to the monastic life. They should try to make progress in holiness and not let their enthusiasm cool. The tone is of loving exhortation.[46]

Is it possible to get a sense of the character of the relationships formed when Anselm and his correspondents lived together in the same community and continued intermittently by letter? He evidently won affection, or Eadmer says so from his own observation of life in the Canterbury community when Anselm was Archbishop. He usually gained his brothers' love, even those who were envious of him (at Bec, Anselm set a challenging standard at fasts and vigils), or disliked him at first as Osbern did.[47]

Eadmer describes how Anselm went through England visiting the Bec lands and other places, some secular, and talked,[48] using similes, adapting what he said to the understanding and attitudes of his listeners. Some record of these talks survives,[49] compiled by various means, of some of which Anselm would not have approved:

> *Verum a nonnullis me nesciente cum inspecta fuissent, pars eorum transscripta, pars vero distracta est . . . .Quae sunt diversis in locis ac temporibus excepi et litteris commendavi.*[50]

Simple, vivid images abound. Novices often find the monastic life difficult. A sick man seeks medicine to make him better but if it is too strong it can make him worse at first and he asks himself why he took it. He complains. Then it begins to have an effect and he feels wonderfully better and is pleased he took it. So it is with the difficult early stages of monastic life when the novice asks for spiritual medicine to save him and at first regrets its effects.[51] There should be no rivalry between oblates and *conversi.* The oblates say they have never sinned. They are like angels and the *conversi* mere saints. But why should they not respect each other?[52] Some say it is better to serve God in a freelance way (*spontaneus*) than to bind oneself by profession as a monk (*monasterio*

[46] Letter 2, S I, pp. 98–101.
[47] Eadmer, *Life,* I, viii, ed. Southern, pp. 11–15.
[48] Eadmer, *Life,* II. xi, ed. Southern, pp. 73–8.
[49] *Memorials of St. Anselm*, eds. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).
[50] *Dicta,* Prologue, *Memorials of St. Anselm* (78), eds. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 107.
[51] *Memorials of St. Anselm* (77), eds. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 67–8.
[52] *Memorials of St. Anselm* (78), eds. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 68–9.

professione se alligans servire). But the monk has given his whole life to God and God takes that into account.[53] A likeness strikes Anselm between a monk and a tree. Two servants of the same master have a tree each. They both bear fruit. One loves his master so much he gives him all the fruit. The other does not.[54] There are two ways of religious life, one inward one outward.[55]

Putting up with separation: Endurance will be rewarded with meeting in heaven

In these travels, Anselm was engaged with the world and its practical demands. This was an uncongenial necessity. But it enabled him to write with sympathy to those who were finding their responsibilities stressful and disruptive of their spiritual lives and their peace. Letter 53 is to Hernost, who has been Bishop of Rochester for less than a year; when he hears how Hernost is worn out by his duties. Anselm has 'human' feelings for him: *contristat me humana maestitia meus affectus.* Suffering now earns rewards later is the only comfort he can offer.[56] Letter 78 was written to Gundulf, about his appointment as Bishop of Rochester, 1077; Gundulf was evidently finding it heavy going.[57]

Anselm's old Bec friend Henry was having a hard time as Prior at Canterbury. Letter 63 was written in awareness of talk of persecutors and slanders. Henry had not written himself or sent actual messengers to tell Anselm but Anselm has heard that relations are not good between Lanfranc and Henry. Yet there has apparently been a reconciliation; Anselm does not want to hear the details. He is glad to rejoice that truth is established and he reassures Henry that he had never believed the untruth anyway. Letter 73 belongs to the same strand. It is written to Henry again and again about troubles with Lanfranc. Advice is offered formally on behalf of Abbot Herluin of Bec.

Anselm approached such unwelcome responsibilities himself by regarding them as a duty. In the spirit of Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis* he was conscious of the need to maintain a spiritual balance. This is the theme of Letter 61 to Fulk, abbot-elect of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives, who is reluctant. Refuse till it amounts to disobedience, counsels Anselm, then accept. Letter 62 to Abbot Walter, who has abandoned his monastery after malicious gossip. Anselm tells him he must come back and carry on. Letter 88 from Abbot Fulk tells Anselm to take his own medicine now he is an abbot himself.

In a similar spirit he writes of the stresses and discomforts of maintaining close friendships in absence. Anselm's remarks in the letters to his absent brothers make no

[53] *Memorials of St. Anselm* (82), eds. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 71–2.
[54] *Memorials of St. Anselm* (84), eds. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 73–4.
[55] Ibid., pp. 77.
[56] 29 August-15 July, 1076. S III. 167.
[57] Letter 127 to Urban (cf. Letters 125–6): Fulk of Beauvais is finding episcopal office too much for him.

complaint about their lack of stability in the life they had begun at Bec. But did Anselm really miss these friends and want to see them? It was a platitude of the classical letter-writer – absence does not matter. Friends can be friends without meeting very often. Anselm notes in Letter 2, with characteristic disregard for the longing to see someone loved in person, that however *rarus sit aspectus, affectus* may be *continuus*.[58] Letter 37 to Lanzo, now a novice at Cluny, speaks of the unity of souls even when bodies are separated. Reunion after death can be hoped for if separation is borne patiently now. But we should at least 'visit each other' through letters when we can, suggests Anselm. However, sometimes it seems that visits are wanted. When are you coming to see us? Anselm asks Henry in Letter 40.

Conclusion

These are tantalizing letters, because they were written within conventions and in circumstances we cannot fully penetrate. Whatever the natural feelings which underlay Anselm's monastic friendships and these letters, they were certainly moderated (not least in the act of feeling itself) by conscious 'expectations' and proprieties. They were further moderated by the conventions of contemporary letter-writing and the need for what was said to be edifying not only to the recipient but in most cases to others who might be expected to read them. The letters were kept and formed in due course into a collection. They were artefacts with a purpose as well as expressions of affection and friendship. But they tested monastic stability by reaching out on the basis of the closeness of a community to monks who were no longer living in it.

[58] Letter 2, S 1.99.

12

'Between Dialectic and the Sacred Scripture: Anselm of Canterbury and the Bible'*

Giles E. M. Gasper

Despite the later medieval tradition attribution of biblical commentary on the New Testament to Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1093–1109), he made no contribution to biblical commentary as a genre in its own right. Unlike Lanfranc, his master and predecessor as archbishop (1070–89), Anselm wrote no commentary on the Pauline epistles. Unlike his near-contemporary Bruno of Segni (c.1050–1133) he wrote no commentary on the Pentateuch, Psalms, Isaiah, the Gospels and the Apocalypse.[1] That does not mean to say that Anselm made no contribution to the exegesis of scripture. On the contrary, exegesis plays an important, if not central, role in the elaboration of his theological vision. Anselm's poetic and prosaic modes present a biblically infused language. As Sir Richard Southern observed, although there are few direct quotations from the Bible in Anselm's work, it is 'filled with biblical echoes' and he '. . . simply absorbed the Bible in his thought and language, and allowed his meditations to grow, as a river gathers strength from the springs from which it flows'.[2]

* I am very grateful for comments on an earlier draft of this paper by Dr Jay Diehl, Long Island University, USA, and Paul Murray, Durham University, UK.

[1] On Lanfranc and his commentary see Ann Collins, *Teacher in Faith and Virtue, Lanfranc of Bec's Commentary on Saint Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), the useful comments in H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc, Scholar, Monk, and Archbishop* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 50–9, and the seminal discussions of Margaret Gibson 'Lanfranc's "Commentary on the Pauline Epistles,"' *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), pp. 86–112 and 'Lanfranc's Notes on Patristic Texts', *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), pp. 435–50. Lanfranc's commentary is still available only in J. A. Giles (ed.), *Beati Lanfranci Cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, 2 vols (Oxford: Parker, 1844) and L. D'Archery (ed.), *Beati Lanfranci Cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia* (Paris: Ioannis Billlaine, 1648) reprinted in *Patrologia Latina* 150. On Bruno of Segni, the study by R. Grégoire remains fundamental, *Bruno de Segni: Exégète Médiéval et Théologien Monastique* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 1965). Bruno's commentary on John is the subject of an analysis by William M. Wright IV, *Rhetoric and Theology: Figural Reading of John 9* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 123–8. Editions of Bruno's texts are to be found in *Patrologia Latina*, 164 and 165.

[2] R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 70. The question of Anselm's citation of authorities, biblical and patristic, is an interesting one for its relation to his theological method. See G. E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and His Theological Inheritance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 36–42.

Thought and language are the key elements to Anselm's engagement with scripture. The biblical sheen of much of his writing, especially in his prayerful and meditative mode, should not draw attention away from the role biblical learning plays in the architecture of his thought. A pertinent example is his treatise on truth, the *De veritate*. While the treatise is, in some manner, a philosophical discussion of truth, and, as the first chapter indicates, a guide as to how to read Anselm's earlier treatise the *Monologion*, its primary purpose is different.[3] In the preface to the group of three treatises, of which that on truth is the first, Anselm characterizes all three as 'pertaining to the study of Sacred Scripture'.[4]

This purpose is essential for any contextualization of the treatise. Within the *De veritate* Anselm distinguishes between three levels of truthfulness: the truth of signification and statements (including opinion, the will, action and the senses), the truth of being and the Supreme Truth. Crucial to the whole programme of thought is the centrality of God, as Supreme Truth. As Anselm puts it at the end of the treatise: 'Supreme Truth, existing in and of itself, is not the truth of anything; but when something accords with Supreme Truth, then we speak of the truth, or rightness, of that thing.'[5] It is only the participation in Truth, which allows any truthfulness within creation, including human existence and activity. Participation comes, in the case of grammatical construction, through its correctness; in the case of behaviour and being, through its alignment to uprightness and reasonableness, behaving, as Anselm might put it, as something ought.

The bearing of the treatise on truth on biblical study is to emphasize both its status as both a privileged text, and one also of human composition. Scripture remains authoritative, but its truth is dependent on its alignment with the Supreme Truth. In a fallen world, its interpretation must be painstaking, careful and meditative, and Anselm also leaves a place open in this arena to human reason. His position is clarified in his final treatise, the *De concordia*, completed in the final year of his life, 1109:

> For, indeed, in our preaching, nothing which Sacred Scripture – made fruitful by the miracle of the Holy Spirit – has not sent forth or does not contain is conducive to spiritual salvation. Now, if on the basis of rational considerations we sometimes

[3] Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams in their *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) note that '. . . the unchallenged centrality of God in Anselm's philosophical explorations is nowhere more in evidence than in his account of truth', p. 41; *De veritate*, 1, begins with the Student asking the Teacher for clarification of the *Monologion*'s chapter 18, on truth, time, beginnings and endings.

[4] Anselm, *De veritate*, Preface: 'Tres tractatus pertinentes ad stadium sacrae scripturae . . .'. Anselm is also insistent that the order of the treatises, the *De veritate*, the *De libertate arbitrii* and the *De casu diaboli*, be followed, castigating the 'rash individuals' who 'have transcribed them in a different order before they were completed' 'Licet itaque a quibusdam festinantibus alio sint ordine transcripti, antequam perfecti essent . . .'.

[5] Anselm, *De veritate*, 13: 'ita summa veritas per se subsistens nullius rei est; sed cum aliquid secundum illam est, tunc eius dicitur veritas vel rectitudo'. All quotations from Anselm's works are taken from the standard critical edition of Anselm's works, *Opera omnia S. Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, 6 vols. [vol. 1 printed at Seckau 1938; vol 2 at Rome 1940, all reset for the Nelson edn] (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1946–61), and the translation of J. Hopkins and Herbert Richardson, *The Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury* (Toronto: Mellen Press, 1976), with occasional emendation. All quotations from the Bible are from the Vulgate and Douay-Rheims translation. Vulgate numbering for the Psalms has been retained throughout.

> make a statement which we cannot clearly exhibit in the words of Scriptures, or cannot prove by reference to these words, nonetheless in the following way we know by means of Scripture whether the statement ought to be accepted or rejected. If the statement is arrived at by clear reasoning and if Scripture in no way contradicts it, then (since even as Scripture opposes no truth, so it favours no falsity) by the very fact that Scripture does not deny that which is affirmed on the basis of rational considerations, this affirmation is supported by the authority of Scripture. But if Scripture unquestioningly opposes a view of ours, then even though our reasoning seems to us unassailable, this reasoning should not be believed to be supported by any truth. So, then, Sacred Scripture, in that it either clearly affirms them or else does not at all deny them, contains the authority for all rationally derived truths.[6]

It is this position regarding scripture, reason and truth to which the *De veritate* points.

The passage from the *De concordia* also contextualizes some of Anselm's most famous statements about the use, or not, of scripture within other of his earlier treatises. Anselm is famous for his insistence that he would establish positions of argument without reference to authorities and to the Bible. In the preface to *Monologion* he states quite clearly that, on the request of certain brothers within the community at Bec, Anselm has set down his observations in such a way

> that nothing at all in the meditation would be argued on Scriptural authority, but that in unembellished style and by unsophisticated arguments and with uncomplicated disputation rational necessity would tersely prove to be the case, and truth's clarity would openly manifest to be the case, whatever the conclusion resulting from the distinct inquiries would declare.[7]

The *Proslogion* equally searches for the argument or consideration 'that requires nothing other than itself for proving itself'.[8] Again, and later, in the *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm sets out the purpose of an approach, which emphasizes argument by reason:

> In accordance with the subject-matter with which it deals I entitled it *Why God Became a [God-]man*; and I divided it into two short books. The first of these contains the answers of believers to the objections of unbelievers who repudiate the Christian faith because they regard it as incompatible with reason. And this

[6] Anselm, *De concordia*, 3.6: 'Siquidem nihil utiliter ad salutem spiritualem praedicimus, quod sacra scriptura spiritus sancti miraculo foecundata non protulerit, aut intra se non contineat. Nam si quid ratione dicimus aliquando quod in dictis eius aperte monstrare aut ex ipsis probare nequimus: hoc modo per illam cognoscimus, utrum sit accipiendum aut respuendum. Si enim aperta ratione colligitur, et illa ex nulla parte contradicit – quoniam ipsa sicut nulli adversatur veritati, ita nulli favet falsitati –: hoc ipso quia non negat quod ratione dicitur, eius auctoritate suscipitur. At si ipsa nostro sensui indubitanter repugnant: quamvis nobis ratio nostra videatur inexpugnabilis, nulla tamen veritate fulciri credenda est. Sic itaque sacra scriptura omnis veritatis quam ratio colligit auctoritatem continent, cum illam aut aperte affirmat aut nullatenus negat.'

[7] *Monologion*, Preface: 'quatenus auctoritate scripturae penitus nihil in ea persuaderetur, sed quidquid per singulas investigationes finis assereret, id ita esse plano stilo et vulgaribus argumentis simplici que disputatione et rationis necessitas breviter cogeret et veritatis claritas patenter ostenderet'.

[8] *Proslogion*, Preface: '. . . quod nullo alio ad se probandum quam se solo indigeret . . .'.

> book goes on to prove by rational necessity – Christ being removed from sight, as if there had never been anything known about Him – that no man can possibly be saved without Him. However, in the second book – likewise proceeding as if nothing were known of Christ – I show with equally clear reasoning and truth that human nature was created in order that the whole man (that is, with a body and a soul) would some day enjoy a happy immortality.[9]

Why Anselm adopts these methods, and how successfully, is not the subject of the present discussion. The dialectical purpose and intent that inspires Anselm's *Proslogion* in particular and that may be noted in the *Cur Deus homo* have been the subject of recent analysis.[10] Anselm does not reveal as openly as he might, or as contemporaries and later medieval thinkers would, his dialectical skills and workings, but they are employed in these circumstances to demonstrate the solution to a question which he believes can be rationally answered.

Despite the insistence on the use of reason, and specifically dialectic, in these prefaces, the place that Anselm gives to biblical quotation within his theological scheme is striking. This applies as much to the *De concordia*'s statement that scripture is ultimately more authoritative, because it is more closely aligned to the supreme authority, as it does to the absorption of biblical language in Anselm's prayerful and meditative modes.

In framing the discussion as to how Anselm offers biblical language to his audience, the distinction made by Hans Urs von Balthasar between a 'lyrical' mode of spiritual expression and a more properly 'theological' one is helpful. For von Balthasar the centrepiece of theological reflection, in its modes most urgent and most contemplative, is the totality of God's sharing of the tragedy of human life, in all of its fallenness, suffering and pain. By doing so, the tragic situation in which humanity finds itself is overcome.[11] The lyrical expression enables a mode in which the suffering of Jesus, and his human life, can be recalled; theology is less emotional for von Balthasar, rendering the 'sober and the epic', describing historical events in their universal significance. As he states:

> "Lyrical" here means the internal motion of the devout subject, his emotion and submission, the creative outpouring of himself in the face of the vivid

[9] *Cur Deus homo*, Preface: 'Quod secundum materiam de qua editum est, Cur deus homo nominavi et in duos libellos distinxi. Quorum prior quidem infidelium Christianam fidem, quia rationi putant illam repugnare, respuentium continet obiectiones et fidelium responsiones. Ac tandem remoto Christo, quasi numquam aliquid fuerit de illo, probat rationibus necessariis esse impossibile ullum hominem salvari sine illo. In secundo autem libro similiter quasi nihil sciatur de Christo, monstratur non minus aperta ratione et veritate naturam humanam ad hoc institutam esse, ut aliquando immortalitate beata totus homo, id est in corpore et anima, frueretur . . .'

[10] See particularly Ian Logan, *Reading Anselm's Proslogion* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) and T. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leide: Brill, 1996), 'Logic and Theology in the Eleventh Century: Anselm and Lanfranc's Heritage', in Giles E. M. Gasper and H. Kohlenberger (eds.), *Anselm and Abelard: Investigations and Juxtapositions* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2006), pp. 1–16, 'Anselm's *Argumentum* and the Early Medieval Theory of Argument' *Vivarium,* 45 (2007), pp. 1–29, and 'The *Proslogion* in Relation to the *Monologion*', *Heythrop Journal* 50 (2009), pp. 590–602.

[11] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, vol. 2, *The Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988, orig. publ. in German 1983), p. 54.

> re-presentation, in its pristine originality, of what is a past event . . . strict theology seems unable to rise to this "lyrical" exuberance; it must always try to be as objective as possible, "always ready" to "make a defense to anyone who calls you to account" regarding the Christian faith (1 Pet. 3.15) – including pagans and Jews and wavering or wayward Christians, who would gain little more lyrical effusions.[12]

Anselm's prayerful theology, and theological prayer, is well suited to this distinction of modes. He operates in both a lyrical and theological manner in von Balthasar's sense, and in doing so, reveals much about his use of scripture.

Two early works by Anselm offer a suitable series of examples in which to see his blending of exegesis and dialectic, and the multidimensional manner in which his biblical understanding comes into being. The first is the Prayer to Christ, prominent within the collection of prayers and meditations that form some of the earliest of Anselm's written compositions, although the process of collection and revision occupied him until the early twelfth century. It is in the prayers and meditations that Anselm developed his particular devotional style, the examination of which was, in English scholarship, especially the purview of Sir Richard Southern and Benedicta Ward.[13] The prayers for Southern exemplify 'a characteristic combination of extreme fervor or expression, systematic completeness, practical restraint . . . the marks of the Anselmian revolution . . . warmth, even violence, of expression is accompanied by great precision of intention and severity of operation'.[14] For Ward:

> The *Prayers and Meditations* are not . . . full of direct quotation, but they are made up from the remembered language of the Bible: Anselm had so assimilated divine truth through reading, that the scriptures had become his spontaneous prayer. The texture of the *Prayers and Meditations* is composed of biblical words and images, and Anselm's personal devotion is given mysterious depth by this.[15]

While the extent to which Anselm's spirituality was as revolutionary as his theology is subject to debate, his importance in bringing together affective piety and systematic thought is well established. To that end the second work that will be considered is the *Proslogion*. One of Anselm's most famous works, its architectural strategies, construction and rhetorical evolution are founded in scripture.

That Anselm had started to compose some of the *Prayers and Meditations* by the 1070s is revealed in his short collection of extracts from the Psalms, compiled while still Prior of Bec, in the early 1070s, for Adelaide, daughter of William the Conqueror. Seven prayers including those to St Stephen and St Mary Magdalen accompanied the *Flowers of the Psalms*.[16] However, Anselm's compilation did not circulate with his collections of prayers, and it is not a genre to which he returned.[17] The *Prayer to Christ*

[12] von Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, vol. 2, p. 55.
[13] B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm, with the Proslogion* (London: Penguin, 1973).
[14] Southern, *Portrait*, p. 103. This is part of a longer discussion of the prayers and meditations, forming pp. 91–112.
[15] Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 46.
[16] Anselm, *Ep*. 10.
[17] Southern, *Portrait*, pp. 99–100.

itself may well have formed part of Anselm's earlier experiments, but it is first found in the collection of prayers that he sent to Countess Mathilda of Tuscany in 1104.[18]

The relationship between the prayers and Anselm's other works is a complex issue.[19] There is an extent to which they should be regarded as a separate genre and expression, but at the same time they should not be divorced from Anselm's other works. The fact that they were among the first of his written works is itself a complicating factor. The instinct to compartmentalize, categorize and understand Anselm's thought through the chronological order of his works is sensible: but in the case of the *Prayers* however, such an emphasis creates a tendency to treat them independently of works that appear to come later in Anselm's canon.[20] The formal collection of the prayers, and the development of a meditative mode of expression were activities that concerned him across the span of his writings, and addressed topics raised by the treatises through a different voice. In this connection Eileen Sweeney has recently redirected attention to the holistic nature of Anselm's thought, an approach which is both appropriate and helpful for appreciating the place to be given to his *Prayers*. As she puts it: 'In Anselm's prayers the gap between desire and the thing desired – the sinful soul and God – is the widest and most untransversable, but the structure of the problem remains the same in his subsequent works.'[21] Adopting a perspective that accounts for both change over time and the underlying unity of Anselm's thought allows particular prayers to be viewed in their most fitting context.

That the first record of the *Prayer to Christ* is in connection with the collection of 1104 should prompt consideration of its style and content. As Ward states, the *Prayer to Christ* 'belongs most completely to the "new style" of devotion of the eleventh and twelfth centuries'.[22] Anselm recalls a sense of despair at not having been able to witness

[18] Anselm, *Ep.* 325 to Matilda informs her that he is sending a copy of his prayers and meditations; from this the surviving copy now Admont, Stiftsbibliothek MS 289, was made in the early part of the twelfth century. See R. Fulton, 'Praying with Anselm at Admont: A Meditation on Practice', *Speculum* 81 (2006), pp. 700–33, esp. 705–6. On Anselm's support for devotion as practised by noble women, lay and religious, is the subject of a recent study by Suzanne Schenk, *Ama et habe*, *Perspektiven des Heils in Anselms Korrespondenz mit Frauen* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012). See also, S. N. Vaughn, *St Anselm and the Handmaidens of God. A Study of Anselm's Correspondence with Women* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

[19] The most sustained effort to situate and integrate the prayers within Anselm's larger corpus is the persuasive treatment offered in Eileen Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word* (Washington D. C., 2012), especially pp. 13–37.

[20] Eadmer in his *Life of Saint Anselm*, ed. and trans. R. W. Southern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, with reprints), i. 8, remarks on Anselm's prayers at an early point in the first book: 'As for his prayers, which at the desire and request of his friends he wrote and published, anyone can see them without my speaking about them with what anxious care, with what fear, with what hope and love he addressed himself to God and his saints, and taught others to do the same [In orationibus autem quas ipse iuxta desiderium et petitionem amicorum suorum scriptas edidit, qua sollicitudine, quo timore, qua spe, quo amore Deum et sanctos eius interpellaverit, necne interpellandos docuerit satis est et me tacente videre].' The context of the chapter is Anselm's preeminence in spiritual virtue and discipline. Eadmer lists and describes the works up to the *Proslogion* only later, at i.19. Anselm's other works are listed at their point of composition within his later life and ecclesiastical career. The *Prayers and Meditations* are the penultimate item in the great Canterbury collection of Anselm's works, now Bodley 271, listed in T. H. Bestul, 'The Manuscript Tradition of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*', *Studia Anselmiana* 128 (1999), pp. 285–307 at 307.

[21] Sweeney, *Desire for the Word*, p. 36.

[22] Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 60, part of a useful summary of the prayer as a whole.

Christ's life and passion. After alluding to the birth of Christ it is an extended mental recreation of his passion, resurrection and transfiguration that occupies the majority of the prayer, before ending on a strong eschatological note. A composition date closer to 1104 would place it after Anselm's multidimensional treatment of the atonement in a cluster of works from the 1090s, the *Epistola de incarnatione verbi Dei*, and especially the *Cur Deus homo* and its companion pieces, the *De conceptu Virginali* and the *Meditatio de humanis redemptionis*. It is not possible to be certain about the dating, but the possibility that the *Prayer to Christ* might post-date the *Proslogion* should not be overlooked.

The *Prayer to Christ* explores theological themes connected to the life, death, resurrection and transfiguration of Christ. The dominant motif, as stated above, is Anselm's authorial desire to have been present at the events of the passion, and his sorrow and self-deprecation that he was not allowed to be so. The theme of the whole prayer is indicated in the first biblical passage to which allusion is made. Christ, Anselm has made clear, is the end of his thoughts, of his life, emphasizing the unequal relationship between Creator and sinner 'by your powerful kindness complete/what in my powerless weakness I attempt'.[23] Psalm 37 (V) is then worked into Anselm's meditation on his desire that Christ should complete what he began: allowing Anselm to experience the full measure of joy, devotion and love.

> My light, you see my conscience,
> because, 'Lord, before you is all my desire',
> and if my soul wills any good, you gave it to me.[24]

The Psalm, of which this is verse 10, is a lament for the miserable state of mankind, focused on the physical corruption of the body, and the sinful nature of the whole: 'There is no health on my flesh . . . no peace in my bones . . . my sores are putrefied and corrupted because of my foolishness'.[25] The object of desire is before the Psalmist, while his family and friends have left him abandoned and in exile. The second half of the Psalm is an appeal to God, for guidance, a proper hearing and salvation, in the light of all struggles to come: 'For I am ready for scourges, and my sorrow is continually before me. . . . Attend unto my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation.'[26]

Anselm uses Psalm 37 as the basis for the rest of the *Prayer to Christ*, structurally in terms of the way in which movement towards the object of desire is dependent on the grace of that object itself, and theologically in terms of the Christological valence with which he endows the Psalm. The Psalm is alluded to in the passion scene in Luke's Gospel, underlining Anselm's Christological purpose in so employing it to set the context and tenor of the prayer. Verse 12 (V) in which the Psalmist speaks of the exile and loneliness in which he has been left by those who knew him well: 'My friends and my neighbours have drawn near, and stood against me. And they that were near me

[23] *Prayer to Christ*, ll. 14–15; *Or. ad Chris.*, ll. 10–11: '. . . compleat tua potentissima benignitas quod conatur mea tepidissima imbecillitas'.

[24] *Prayer to Christ*, ll. 20–22; *Or. ad Chris.,* ll. 14–15: 'Illuminatio mea, tu vides conscientiam mean, quia, 'domine, ante te omne desiderium meum'; et tu donas si quid bene vult anima mea'.

[25] Ps. 37. 4, 6.

[26] Ps. 37. 18, 23.

stood afar off [cari mei et amici mei quasi contra lepram meam steterunt et vicini mei longe steterunt],' has been matched traditionally with Luke's description of those who knew Jesus well standing to one side after his death: 'And all his acquaintance and the women that had followed him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things. [stabant autem omnes noti eius a longe et mulieres quae secutae erant eum a Galilaea haec videntes]'.[27]

Additional support for the Christological reading is to be found in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. While Anselm's reading habits are difficult to trace precisely, it is highly likely that he would have had access to the *Enarrationes*.[28] Southern remarked on the similarity between the absorption of the Bible and that of Augustine's works in Anselm's intellectual and meditative practices.[29] Augustine's thought was ingrained into Anselm's, so much so that it is not easy to follow directions of travel which are clearly derived from the former in the latter. In the use of Psalm 37 in the *Prayer to Christ* a good case can be made for Anselm's moving between scriptural texts and Augustine's exegesis, with both serving to enlarge the space in which the prayerful, lyrical mode operates, using authority and reason within a response to scripture which is imaginative and carefully crafted.

Augustine is celebrated for his Christological interpretation of the Psalms, and this applies no less to Psalm 37.[30] Immediately in his commentary on the particular verse alluded to by Anselm, Augustine enshrines the connection between the Psalm and prayer. It is before Christ and the Father that all the desires of the Psalmist are laid, according to Augustine, who recalls Matthew 6.6 in this context: 'the Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee'. The full verse from Matthew comes from the sermon on the mount, immediately preceding the Lord's prayer:

> But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy father who seeth in secret will repay thee [tu autem cum orabis intra in cubiculum tuum et cluso ostio tuo ora Patrem tuum in abscondito et Pater tuus qui videt in abscondito reddet tibi] . . .

Matthew 6.6. is the spur to the opening of Anselm's *Proslogion* and it is striking to find the invocation explicit in Augustine's exegesis.[31] The whole emphasis of

[27] Ps. 37. 12 and Lk. 23. 49.

[28] Southern, *Portrait*, p. 58: '. . . if Anselm has had no other sources of inspiration than the Bible, the Rule of St Benedict, and Augustine's *De Trinitate*, *Confessions*, *De Civitate Dei* and *Sermons on the Psalms*, he would have had all the inspiration he needed for everything of importance that he wrote'. The *Enarrationes* are present in the twelfth-century library catalogue from Bec, and feature in Lanfranc's *De corpore et sanguine Domini*. For an assessment of the library at Bec during Anselm's period as monk, prior and abbot see Gasper, *Theological Inheritance*, pp. 81–106 and Appendix 1.

[29] Southern, *Portrait*, p. 73.

[30] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. Clemens Weidmann, CSEL 93/1 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011). Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*, The Works of Saint Augustine, 6 vols, ed. J. E. Rotelle, trans. M. Boulding (New York: New City Press, 2000–04). Among a significant literature see R. Williams, 'St Augustine and the Psalms', *Interpretation* 58 (2004), pp. 17–27 and Michael Fiedorowicz, *Vox Totius Christi: Studien zu Augustin's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1997).

[31] This might be taken to support the position that the *Prayer to Christ* was written before the *Proslogion*.

Augustine's commentary is on prayer, on its mechanics, its origin, its direction and its fulfilment.

> This very desire is your prayer, and if your desire is continuous, your prayer is continuous too. The apostle meant what he said, *Pray without ceasing* (1 Thess. 17). But can we be on our knees all the time, or prostrate ourselves continuously, or be holding up our hands uninterruptedly, that he bids us, *Pray without ceasing*? If we say that these things constitute prayer, I do not think we can pray without ceasing. But there is another kind of prayer that never ceases, an interior prayer that is desire.[32]

Augustine goes on to remark that the 'groaning of the heart' is the very expression of desire, and as such is not hidden from God, and offers the hope that such groaning never ceases to sound in his ears. The rest of Anselm's prayer can be read in light of this commentary; the Christological frame, the expression of spiritual longing and distress through vivid physical imagery, and the constant seeking after truth which lies beyond the seeker's grasp, the inaccessible foundation on which all else is constructed.

Both the bible and Patristic writing can be seen to operate within the way in which Anselm sets up his *Prayer to Christ*, and in such a way to indicate the thematic structure and tonal dimensions of the whole text. Anselm's audiences for these works were intimate, the members of his own community, as well as those outside, and given the intensity with which he insisted that the *Prayers* be approached, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the biblical and exegetical resonances offer more help in and of themselves within the meditative reading process. On sending the prayers to Mathilda of Tuscany Anselm wrote instructing her that they

> . . . are arranged so that by reading them the mind may be stirred either to the love or the fear of God, or to a consideration of both; so they should not be read cursorily or quickly, but little by little, with attention and deep meditation. It is not intended that the reader should feel impelled to read the whole, but only as much as will stir up the affections to prayer.[33]

With these injunctions in mind, it is possible to see the holistic nature of the *Prayer to Christ*. The interpretative framework is built around reference points, both scriptural and, it can be strongly suggested, from traditions of scriptural commentary, which capture and reveal the whole of the prayer, in its parts, each allusion to scripture resonating within this kaleidoscopic structure.

[32] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps. 37, c. 14: 'Ipsum enim desiderium tuum, oratio tua est: et si continuum desiderium, continua oratio. Non enim frustra dixit Apostolus, Sine intermissione orantes (I Thess. V, 17). Numquid sine intermissione genu flectimus, corpus prosternimus, aut manus levamus, ut dicat, Sine intermissione orate? Aut si sic dicimus nos orare, hoc puto sine intermissione non possumus facere. Est alia interior sine intermissione oratio, quae est desiderium.'; *Expositions of the Psalms*, trans. Boulding, pp. 156–7.

[33] *Letter to Countess Mathilda of Tuscany*, trans. Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 90; ed. Schimtt, vol. 3, p. 4: 'Quae quoniam ad excitandam legentis mentem ad dei amorem vel timorem seu ad suimet discussionem sunt ediate, non sunt legendae cursim vel velociter, sed paulatim cum intent et morose meditatione. Nec debet intendere lector quamlibet earum total legere, sed tantum quantum ad excitandum affectum orandi . . .'.

As the prayer moves towards the spiritual re-enactment, or rather, reimagining of the passion and resurrection of Christ, a number of other scriptural allusions are made. These are most obvious in the use of the Gospel narratives, with an emphasis on John: the nails, the blood, the bitter gall Christ is given to drink, and the suffering of Mary are all recalled. Mary's sorrow is foreshadowed in Anselm's earlier overlaying of scriptural images:

> Why, O my soul, were you not there
> to be pierced by a sword of bitter sorrow
> when you could not bear
> the piercing of the side of your Saviour with a lance?[34]

The sword of bitter sorrow are part of Symeon's words to Mary prophesying the redemptive work of her baby son, the sword here contrasted to the lance of John's passion.[35] Anselm's conflation of symbols to create the conceptual image does not so much dislocate the temporal sequence of the events to which allusion is made, as present them as a whole. Christ's birth and death are presented, in accordance with Luke's Gospel, as complete within each other.

The limits of human reason, by contrast to the limitless knowledge of Christ is a further theme with which Anselm dwells throughout the prayer, drawing this out from a number of different scriptural sources. At the midpoint of the prayer, Anselm offers the following comments just before the evocation of the passion:

> Alas for me, that I was not able to see
> the Lord of Angels humbled to converse with men,
> and men exalted to converse with angels
> when God, the one insulted,
> willed to die that the sinner might live.[36]

The allusion here is to Baruch 3.38: 'Afterwards he was seen upon earth, and conversed with men'.[37] In its wider context the verse is part of a glorification of creation and the unknowable power and majesty of God, which serves to underline the enormity of God's humility, as Anselm stresses. The passage from Baruch also emphasizes the wisdom of God, in the context of creation; and contrasts this to the fate of the giants, 'those renowned men that were from the beginning, of great stature, expert in war'.

[34] *Prayer to Christ*, ll. 79–82; *Or. ad Chris.*, ll. 42–43: 'Cur, o anima mea, te praesentem non transfixit gladius doloris acutissimi, cum ferre non posses vulnerary lancea latus tui salvatoris?'.

[35] Lk. 2: 35: 'And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that, out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed [et tuam ipsius animam pertransiet gladius ut revelentur ex multis cordibus cogitations]'. Jn 19.34: 'But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side: and immediately there came out blood and water [sed unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua]'.

[36] *Prayer to Christ*, ll. 73–76; *Or. ad Chris.*, ll. 38–40: 'Heu mihi, qui videre non potui dominum angelorum humilitatum ad conversationem hominum, ut homines exaltaret ad conversationem angelorum! Cum deus offensus sponte moreibatur ut peccator viveret . . .'

[37] Bar. 3.38: 'post haec in terris visus est et cum hominibus conversatus est'.

They did not find the way of knowledge, and as a result 'perished through their folly'.[38] Anselm's scriptural quotation provokes a wider reflection on the distance between Creator and creation, and the importance of the miraculous incarnation of Christ. The subject of the *Prayer* is encapsulated within the quotation and its textual and meditative hinterland.

The reconciliation of fallen creation, and of sinful man, within Christ's suffering, resurrection and transfiguration, take Anselm in an eschatological direction at the end of the *Prayer to Christ*. It is a movement in which it is possible to see Anselm in dialogue again with both scriptural and Augustinian authority. The final stanza of the *Prayer* evinces the hope that

> Perhaps my Redeemer will come to me,
> because he is good,
> he is kind, he will not tarry,
> to whom be glory for ever. Amen.[39]

Both Hebrews 10.37 and Romans 11.36 have resonance with Anselm's text here, as do the final words of the Apocalypse.[40] An eschatological ending is in keeping with an operating principle that truthfulness is dependent on the deeper truth of being and ultimately the Supreme Being. It may be that in this final allusion Anselm points to the position which his *De veritate* expounds more fully. If Romans 11.36 is taken as the controlling text, 'For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory for ever [quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso omnia ipsi gloria in saecula]', Anselm may also be reinforcing a trinitarian reading, mirroring the christocentric opening. The *Prayer to Christ* concerns the operation of one person of the Trinity, but this allusion may form a statement of the inseparability of the three. This interpretation relies upon the Augustinian reading of the verse as trinitarian. As Lewis Ayres has shown, Augustine asserts this in a number of early works, including the *De moribus* and the *De fide et symbolo*, and in so doing was probably following Ambrose's interpretation offered in the *De spiritu*, 'to bolster his account of an intelligible cosmos immediately sustained by the triune life'.[41]

[38] Bar. 3.26–28: 3.27–28: 'The Lord chose not them, neither did they find the way of knowledge: therefore did they perish. And because they had not wisdom, they perished through their folly [non hos elegit Deus neque viam disciplinae dedit illis et perierunt eo quod non haberent sapientiam et perierunt propter insipientiam suam].' It is to the character of the fool 'insipiens' that Anselm directs the *Proslogion*.

[39] *Prayer to Christ*, pp. 188–91; *Or. ad Chris.*, ll. 96–97: 'Veniet interea fortasse redemptor meus, quoniam bonus est; nec tardabit, quia pius est; 'ipsa gloria in saecula' saeculorum, amen.'

[40] Heb. 10.37: For yet a little and a very little while, and he that is to come will come and will not delay [adhuc enim modicum quantulum qui venturus est veniet et non tardabit]; Rom. 11.36: 'For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen [quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso omnia ipsi gloria in saecula amen]; Apocalypse, 22.20: 'He that giveth testimony of these things, saith: Surely, I come quickly: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus [dicit qui testimonium perhibet istorum etiam venio cito amen veni Domine Iesu].'

[41] L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 53–6, quotation from p. 56.

Even if Anselm did not intend such a deep reading, it is striking to note that Augustine's commentary on Psalm 37, that with which Anselm began his prayer, moves the point of vision forward to one of eschatological hope. In this light Anselm's ending, with the hope that his redeemer will not tarry, can be seen as a fulfilment of the Psalm's final verses:

> Forsake me not, O Lord my God: do not thou depart from me Attend unto my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation [ne derelinquas me Domine Deus meus ne elongeris a me, festina in auxilium meum Domine salutis meae].[42]

The same concern for the consequences of the fall, not least in the imperfection of human reason, judgement and will, expressed in the *Prayer to Christ* are no less present in the *Proslogion*. The shattering effects of original sin provide another theme for constant meditation by Anselm, and it emerges powerfully at the beginning of the *Proslogion*. Anselm's dialectical and argumentative purpose in this treatise is introduced, as is well known, by a prayerful invocation of the consequences of original sin and the gulf between creator and his creation. How God is to be known, grasped, approached, are the questions with which Anselm dwells. The *Proslogion*, unlike the *Prayer to Christ*, creates a forum in which Anselm offers rational, logical discussion of the questions he has set himself. However, the extent to which these remain biblically derived and their solution biblically inspired is a striking and key element in Anselm's theological approach. Dialectic and sacred scripture are not set against each other, although the former is presented as a different mode of investigation. The whole setting and construction of the treatise is important to consider, not merely, as has often been the case, commentary on chapters two, three and four, the so-called ontological argument.[43]

The opening chapter is based around a compelling biblical narrative of exile and hope resonating with biblical experiences at a number of different levels. Anselm begins the *Proslogion* with reference to Matthew 6.6, within the opening sequence:

> Come now, little man,
> turn aside for a while from your daily employment,
> escape for a moment the tumult of your thoughts.
> Put aside your weighty cares,
> lest your burdensome distraction wait,
> free yourself awhile for God
> and rest awhile in him.
> Enter the inner chamber of your soul,
> shut out everything except God

[42] Ps. 37.22–23.

[43] The literature on the *Proslogion* is too extensive to summarize here. See footnote 10 above for recent commentary on the dialectical aspects of the treatise. For discussion of the composition of the treatise see Giles E. M. Gasper, 'Envy, Jealousy and the Boundaries of Orthodoxy: Anselm, Eadmer and the Genesis of the Proslogion' *Viator* 41 (2010), pp. 45–68. The capacity for the *Proslogion* to inspire philosophical reflection is striking, most recently Geo Siegwart, 'Gaunilo referiert Anselm. Aus dem Tagesgeschäft des Rekonstrukteurs', *Kriterion – Journal of Philosophy* 27 (2013), pp. 1–29. None of these treatments examine the biblical setting in which the philosophical discussion occurs.

> and that which can help you in seeking him,
> and when you have shut the door, seek him.[44]

The verse from Matthew is an injunction to prayer:

> But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy father who sees in secret will repay you [tu autem cum orabis intra in cubiculum tuum et cluso ostio tuo ora Patrem tuum in abscondito et Pater tuus qui videt in abscondito reddet tibi].

The broader context of the passage is the sermon on the mount and the Lord's Prayer. Anselm begins his treatise, then, in prayer, in an environment where the presence of God is sought deliberately.

The first chapter of the *Proslogion* then moves through a sequence of quotations, drawn especially from the Psalms but including Exodus, Job, Jeremiah and Genesis, in which the consequences of the sin of Adam are explored, in powerful, lyrical language. The disfiguration caused by sin, the pain and distress, the clouding of knowledge and judgement, the sense of abandonment and exile on account of human weakness are among the main themes explored. Anselm constructs his theological questions around and in the words of the Psalms; each quotation used to deepen commentary and further questions. He moves, in total, through Psalms 26, 50, 77, 126, 121, 114, 37, 6, 12, 79, 44, 68; the direction and purpose of this sequence can be indicated in the following examples.

Psalm 50.11: '**Turn away thy face from my sins** and blot out mine iniquities [absconde faciem tuam a peccatis meis et omnes iniquitates meas dele].' Anselm poses questions bordering on the paradoxical, he loves to seek God, but does not know God's face leaving the sinner far short of the purpose for which God intended him.[45]

Psalm 114.3: 'The sorrows of death have compassed me: and the perils of hell have found me. **I met with trouble and sorrow** [circumdederunt me funes mortis et munitions inferni invenerunt me angustiam et dolorem repperi]'. The authorial voice has moved through a description of the wretchedness of the human state, those who used to eat the food of angels now eating the bread of sorrow; exile and blindness the consequence of disobedience. As Anselm expresses it, just before this verse from Psalm 114, 'I was going towards God, and I was my own impediment'.[46]

Psalm 6: 'And my soul is troubled exceedingly: but you, **O Lord, how long?** [et anima mea turbata est valde et tu Domine usquequo]'. Beyond the halfway point of Anselm's spiritual odyssey, the despair of the sinner is still uppermost, Psalm 6 and then Psalm

[44] Anselm, *Proslogion*, 1; trans. Ward, p. 239; ed. Schimtt, vol. 1, p. 97: 'Eia nunc, homuncio, fuge paululum occupationes tuas, absconde te modicum a tumultuosis cogitationibus tuis. Abice nunc onerosas curas, et postpone laboriosas distentiones tuas. Vaca aliquantulum deo, et requiesce aliquantulum in eo. 'Intra in cubiculum' mentis tuae, exclude omnia praeter deum et quae te iuvent ad quaerendum eum, et "clauso ostio" quaere eum'.

[45] Anselm, *Proslogion,* 1, trans. Ward, p. 240, ll. 41–42; ed. Schimtt, vol. 1, p. 98.

[46] Ibid., p. 242, ll. 94–95 and l. 93; ed. Schmitt, vol. 1, p. 99: 'Tendebam in deum, et offendi in me ipsum'.

79.4 (and 79.20): 'Convert us, O God: and shew us thy face, and we shall be saved [Deus converte nos et ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus]' are referenced in quick succession.[47]

Psalm 68: 'Let not the tempest of water drown me, nor the deep water swallow me up: **and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me** [ne operiat me fluvius aquae et ne absorbeat me profundum et non coronet super me puteus os suum]'. As he reaches the climax of the opening chapter Anselm recalls his intense despair once more, but couples this immediately with an appeal to the hope of grace, of God's showing himself to the supplicant.

Through these and other images, Anselm evokes the desolate and desperate state of mankind, and the concomitant need for Divine activity and grace; creation is contingent upon its creator. Anselm ends his opening with a quotation from Genesis 1.27, 'And God created man to his own image', to reinforce the point that the image remains, and that although blotted out, needs only for God to renew and redeem it. With that Anselm ends, finally invoking Isaiah 7.9 on faith and understanding.

This 'lyrical' introduction, to use von Balthasar's terminology, is important in how Anselm sets up his precise, dialectical argument about how God can be said to exist, that he is 'mind-independent' as it might be expressed, and to establish his major and minor premises: that the God is 'mind-independent' and that he really exists, and is appropriately named. The bulk of the treatise is taken up with an exposition of how God is that than which a greater cannot be thought. Anselm has two opponents in this debate, the first the fool, who in Psalm 13, says in his heart, that there is no God, but also classical discussion of the nature of divinity and the world. Anselm's dialectical expertise is employed then to two related, and genuine, questions: how to counter the fool, and how to counter stoic thought. Both of these are countered in a dialectical framework, forcing the opponents to acknowledge the premises of the argument.[48]

Within this exposition, Anselm returns to biblical support for his statements, occasionally counterposing the dialectical and the lyrical or biblical. A good example of this is the juxtaposition of chapters 15 and 16; 15 recapitulates the dialectical argument, 16 takes I Timothy 6.16 as its text and moves ideas around the inaccessibility in which God dwells.

The *Proslogion* ends, as Anselm began, in prayer, though on a laudatory rather than despondent note. Knowledge of God, in the rational demonstration that he has constructed is expressed joyfully, and compared to the 'fullness of joy' of John 16.

> My Lord and my God,
> my joy and the hope of my heart,
> tell my soul if this is that joy
> which you spoke to us about through your Son,
> 'Ask and you will receive that you joy may be full'.
> For I have found a fullness of joy

[47] Ibid., p. 242, ll. 100, 103; ed. Schmitt, vol. 1, p. 99.
[48] For an extended analysis of the dialectical positions, see Logan, *Reading the Proslogion*.

that is more than full.
It is a joy that fills the whole heart, mind, and soul,
indeed it fills the whole of a man,
and yet joy beyond measure still remains.[49]

In the words of von Balthasar: 'Anselm's prayers are magnificent examples of this boldness in praying to God: at the crossroads of various possibilities, he insistently beseeches God for a specific answer to prayer summoning God, as it were, to be consistent, secure in the knowledge that, whatever happens, it will be God's will, and it will be for the best.'[50] To take von Balthasar further, Anselm manages in the *Proslogion* and in other treatises to unite the lyrical and in this case, the dialectical. The frame of the treatise is biblical: dialectic identifies what the argument is and how best to address it, the lyrical, and biblical, provides a reminder of both the reasons why this is beneficial, and of the limitations of human reason. Reason is framed and held within a scriptural landscape, outwith of which it is meaningless.

The same point on Anselm's methods was made by his companion and the composer of his *Vita*, Eadmer, who binds his scriptural exegesis and reasoned thought, in the context of spiritual discipline.

> And so it came about that, being continually given up to God and to spiritual exercises, he attained such a height of divine speculation, that he was able by God's help to see into and unravel many most obscure and previously insoluble questions about the divinity of God and about our faith, and to prove by plain arguments that what he said was firm and catholic truth. For he had so much faith in the Holy Scriptures, that he firmly and inviolably believed that there was nothing in them which deviated from the path of solid truth. Hence he applied his whole mind to this end, that according to his faith he might be found worthy to see with the eye of reason those things in the Holy Scriptures which, as he felt, lay hidden in deep obscurity.[51]

Eadmer goes on to describe an occasion in which Anselm was puzzling on the prophets and in so doing saw through the church and dormitory walls. The truth of things, grounded as it is in the Supreme Truth, is the arbiter and fulcrum for the truth of statements. Both lyrical and theological, Anselm's majestic vision operates dialectically, but its purpose and meaning is the elucidation of scripture, and the invocation to prayer.

[49] Anselm, *Proslogion*, 26; trans. Ward, pp. 265–6; ed. Schmitt, vol. 1, p. 120: 'Deus meus et dominus meus, spes mea et gaudium cordis mei, dic animae meae, si hoc est gaudium de quo nobis dicis per filium tuum: "petite et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum". Inveni namque gaudium quoddam plenum, et plus quam plenum. Pleno quippe corde, plena mente, plena anima, pleno toto homine gaudio illo: adhuc supra modum supererit gaudium.'

[50] von Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, p. 296.

[51] Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi*, i.7: 'Factumque est ut soli Deo caelestibusque disciplinis iugiter occupatus in tantum divinae speculationis culmen ascenderit, ut obscurissimas et ante suum tempus insolutas de divinitate Dei et nostra fide quaestiones Deo reserante perspiceret ac perspectas enodaret, apertisque rationibus quae dicebat rata et catholica esse probaret. Divinis nanque scripturis tantam fidem habebat, ut indissolubili firmitate cordis crederet nihil in eis esse quod solidae veritatis tramitem ullo modo exiret. Quapropter summon studio animum ad hoc intenderat, quatinus iuxta fidem suam mentis ratione mereretur percipere, quae in ipsis sensit multa caligine tecta latere.'

13

Miracles and the Crusading Mind: Monastic Meditations on Jerusalem's Conquest

Jay Rubenstein

In the eyes of monks, the First Crusade (1096–99) was something altogether new, an event unprecedented not only during their own lifetimes, but perhaps during all of Christian history. The Anglo-Norman monk Orderic Vitalis wrote of it, 'So I ponder deeply on these things and commit my meditations to writing, for a tremendous movement is taking place in our own day, and a noble and marvellous theme for exposition is unfolded for writers to study.'[1] Unsurprisingly, miracle stories fill twelfth-century accounts of the crusade. They include, however, few of the most traditional type of medieval miracle – healing. The most glorious deed one could do on crusade, after all, was die – not suffer injury or illness and then recover.[2] Crusading miracles instead tended to be visions. Saintly figures make pronouncements to clerics and soldiers alike. Relics are discovered and used as weapons on the field of battle. Pious armies of the dead ride into battle alongside half-starved and thoroughly exhausted Frankish warriors and play key roles in their victories. But, as Benedicta Ward has observed, outside of any particular instances of divine intervention, medieval observers viewed the very act of crusading itself as miraculous.[3]

This observation is particularly true of the First Crusade, a campaign so improbably successful that it meets the Augustinian definition of miracles: 'wonderful acts of God shown as events in this world, not in opposition to nature but as a drawing out of the hidden workings of God'.[4] No medieval observers were better placed to make sense of the First Crusade than were monks, many of whom, like Orderic, took time to meditate upon it and to draw out the hidden signs that more rough-hewn accounts

[1] Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968–80), vol. 4, 9, pp. 4–5.

[2] In a rare story of illness-and-recovery, Count Raymond of Toulouse fell deathly ill during the march, when a Saxon warrior informed him that he had learnt in a vision from St Gilles that Raymond would recover, but with no indication that the recovery was due to anything but natural causes. Described in Raymond of Aguilers, *Liber*, eds. John Hugh Hill and Laurita Littleton Hill, trans. Philippe Wolff (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1969), p. 46.

[3] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000–1215* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1981, rev. edn 1987), p. 203.

[4] Ibid., p. 3.

had overlooked. Their historical contribution has not always been received kindly. The works of the three most famous of these monastic writers – Baudry of Bourgueil, Robert the Monk and Guibert of Nogent, labelled by Christopher Tyerman as 'the northern French Benedictine mafia'[5] – look like somewhat pompous copies of a much more reliable text called the *Gesta Francorum*.[6] Whereas the monks were prone to moralize and to adopt erudite and grandiloquent airs, the compiler of the *Gesta Francorum* tells his story in straightforward, simple (arguably simplistic) prose. The monastic writers might occasionally add to their source material a detail or two gathered from returning crusade veterans, but the evidentiary value of their work appears slight as best. In the terms of Jonathan Riley-Smith, their real contribution to historical writing was one of 'Theological Refinement'. Working with the raw material of the *Gesta Francorum*, monastic writers infused the crusade with higher truths about the workings of divinity, in the process transforming the crusading host into 'a monastery in motion. Almost every point they made was in tacit comparison to monasticism.'[7] Monastic histories were fine exercises in spirituality, but not necessarily good history.

But life in the monastery may not have been as unsuitable a background for writing military history as this analysis implies. On a basic level, monks – who wore uniforms, shared barracks, ate together in a mess hall, lived highly regimented lives and sported identical haircuts – had more in common with modern ideas of an army that did the typical medieval war band. But one need not look past the twelfth century to find evidence of the overlap that existed between monastic and military ideals. The most monkish element of crusade histories was the claim that secular warriors had deliberately adopted the ascetic practices of the monastery – abandoning their aristocratic finery, eschewing the company of women and practising regular acts of charity, distributing plunder widely and fairly within the army. Their conduct resembles not so much the eleventh-century warriors' life, but rather the ideals of the soon-to-be-established Knights Templar. The spiritual founder of the Templars, Bernard of Clairvaux, famously wrote that he did not know whether to call Templars knights or monks, in part because they 'honor the temple of God earnestly with fervent and sincere worship, in their devotion offering up, not the flesh of animals according to the ancient rites, but true peace offerings, brotherly love, devoted obedience, and voluntary poverty'.[8] On the one hand, expecting brutal warriors to adhere to the niceties of monastic life does seem idealistic, pure fantasy on the part of monastic writers. On the other, the military orders created in the twelfth century asked their members to do precisely that, and these orders represent arguably the most successful experiment in military thought in the

[5] Christopher Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 9. The monks receive their most sympathetic presentation in Jean Flori, *Chroniqueurs et propagandistes: Introduction critique aux sources de la Première Croisade* (Geneva: Droz, 2010), pp. 105–61.

[6] John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 378.

[7] Jonathan Riley Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 150; more generally, pp. 135–55.

[8] Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood: A Treatise on the Knights Templar and the Holy Places of Jerusalem*, trans. M. Conrad Greenia (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 5, p. 50.

entire Middle Ages.[9] Reasons for this conjunction of martial and conventual thought are not difficult to identify. The original template for Benedictine monasticism was the Roman military, and the model of the secular military remained a crucial template for monastic organization throughout the medieval era, as documented recently and thoroughly by Katherine Allen Smith.[10]

What proved most unexpected, and unexpectedly monk-like, about the crusaders was their willingness to accept self-sacrifice. In the normal course of events, at least as monks saw it, eleventh-century warriors fought only for the sake of plunder and their own particular interests. But suddenly, in 1095, they embraced higher ideals. As Guibert of Nogent remarks with evident wonder, no group of aristocratic warriors had ever risked and suffered so much for the sake of spiritual gain alone. 'This is my conclusion, and it is unprecedented.'[11] Such behaviour bordered on the saintly, and indeed a potential path to sainthood seemed open to these otherwise brutal and irredeemable men. As popular understanding would have it, death on crusade qualified as an act of martyrdom.[12] The theological justification for this claim is slim, making the chroniclers' explanation for it all the more striking. 'Many Christians died, some from hunger, some by the sword, others by a sudden death. All of them are blessed with the martyr's crown, since they handed over their bodies out of compassion for their brothers.'[13] They were martyrs not because they had died witnessing for the faith, but rather, because of the bonds of affection that joined them together, because of the sacrifices that each soldier was willing to make for his brother.[14] As an ideal, it is one equally appropriate for both the monastery and the military, and it is an ideal that ultimately has very little to do with theology.

Ultimately, the concept of 'theological refinement' is more misleading than helpful. Theology, the study of the nature of God, implies a degree of scholastic rigour, especially

[9] William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095-c.1187* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), esp. pp. 100–2, draws a similar comparison between the First Crusaders and the Templars, as did Paul Rousset, *Les origines et les caractères de la première croisade* (Neuchâtel: Baconnière, 1945), pp. 162–8.

[10] Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), esp. pp. 79–96.

[11] 'haec mea est sententia, haec unica'; Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medeiaeualis 127A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 7, 5, p. 275.

[12] Jean Flori, 'Mort et martyre des guerriers vers 1100: L'exemple de la première croisade'. *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale (x^e^-xiie siècles)* 34 (1991), pp. 121–39, draws attention to the difficulties implicit in this idea.

[13] 'Mortui sunt multi Christiani, alii fame, alii gladio, alii quolibet exterminio. Hos autem omnes existimant felici laureatos martyrio, quoniam pro fratrum compassione sua corpora tradiderunt'; Baudry of Bourgueil [or Baldric of Dol], *Historia Hierosolymitana*, *Recueil des historiens des Croisades, Historiens occidentaux*, [henceforth, RHC Oc.] 5 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844–95), vol. 4, 1, 27, p. 30. Other chroniclers make use of the same idea. For example: Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana, History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 4, 18, pp. 276–7 and 11, 19, pp. 792–3; *Narratio Floriacensis de captis Antiochia et Hierosolyma et obsesso Dyrrachio*, RHC *Oc.* 5, 3, p. 357; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, eds. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 4, 347, pp. 598–601. The ultimate source is the gospel, John 15.13.

[14] The language echoes ideas discussed in Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Crusading as an Act of Love', *History* 65 (1980). pp. 177–92, but whereas Riley-Smith discusses the willingness of crusaders to die for Christians in danger (such as the Greek Christians under attack by Seljuk Turks), this idea focuses on their willingness to die for one another in battle.

when combined with the word 'refinement', lacking in all of the crusade historians. There is, however, one exceptional passage, where one of the monastic writers attempts to address a truly theological problem, and it concerns miracles. Robert the Monk, during his description of the siege of Antioch, uses an imaginary conversation between a Frankish warrior, a Muslim soldier, and a priest, as a way to clarify the mechanics of the miraculous. The exchange occurs in connection with the betrayal of the city of Antioch, when the Turkish soldier Pirrus agrees to hand the city over to Bohemond. According to Robert's source, the *Gesta Francorum*, Pirrus and Bohemond struck up a friendship during the long months of the siege. 'The two of them exchanged messengers, with Bohemond often asking if Pirrus might welcome him as a friend into his city and promising that he would gladly make Pirrus a Christian and endow him with riches and honours.'[15] Pirrus agreed to these suggestions, and on the night of 3 June 1098, with Pirrus's assistance, the crusading host secretly entered the city, sacked it, and killed most of the inhabitants.

This story in the *Gesta Francorum* leaves many questions unanswered, which Robert the Monk seeks to resolve. How, for example, did Pirrus and Bohemond meet? They struck up an acquaintance, Robert explains, during a short period of truce, not mentioned in the *Gesta Francorum* but confirmed by another source.[16] One day, during their frequent conversations, Pirrus asked Bohemond an unexpected question: 'where he [Bohemond] had situated the camps of that great army comprised of luminous soldiers, by whose aid they [the Franks] had been helped in every battle . . . They all possess wondrously fast white horses and vestments, shields, and banners of the same colour.'[17] Pirrus had, in short, seen the saintly, phantom army to whose presence several Christian chroniclers attest, but he did not understand that it was composed of the saintly dead. Bohemond, moved by Pirrus's simplicity and earnestness, explained that that splendid army of martyrs dwelt not on earth but in heaven, and that it was led by the famous Eastern saints George, Demetrius and Mauritius. He further challenged Pirrus, if he doubted this explanation, to search for the armies throughout the whole region. He would then have to ask himself, 'Where else do they came from so swiftly, if not from the heavenly thrones on which they dwell?'[18]

Bohemond's answer, however, raised further questions with deeper, spiritual implications: 'If they come from heaven, where do they find the white horses, so many

[15] 'Hunc sepe Boamundus pulsabat nuntiis adiuicem missis, quo eum infra ciuitatem amicissime reciperet; eique christinitatem liberius promittebat, et eum se diuitem facturum cum multo honore mandabat'; *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. Rosalind Hill (London: Nelson, 1962), p. 44.

[16] Citations to Robert the Monk will refer to the new edition, with book and chapter references to the older RHC edition in brackets. The two editions are: *The Historia Iherosolimitana of Robert the Monk*, eds. D. Kempf and M. G. Bull (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013); and *Historia Hierosolimitana*, RHC *Oc*. 3, pp. 717–882. For this passage: Robert, *Historia*, p. 51 [5, 8,]. The truce is mentioned in a letter from crusader Anselm of Ribemont, in Heinrich Hagenmeyer (ed.), *Epistulae et chartae ad primi belli sacri spectantes: Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1901), p. 159.

[17] 'ubi castra posuerat ille candidatorum exercitus innumerabilis, quorum in omnibus bellis fulciebantur auxilio. . . . Omnes habent equos albos mire celeritatis, et vestimenta, et scuta, et vexilla eiusdem coloris'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 51 [5, 8].

[18] 'Unde igitur tam cito venient nisi a supernis sedibus in quibus morantur?'; Ibid., pp. 51–2 [5, 8].

shields, so many banners?' Bohemond admitted this problem to be beyond his capacity and called upon his chaplain, who gives perhaps the longest theological disquisition in any of the crusade narratives.

> When the almighty Creator chooses to send his angels or the spirits of the just to earth, they take up ethereal bodies, so that through these bodies they – whom we cannot perceive in their spiritual essence – can make themselves known to us. They seem to be armed so as to indicate that they are coming to help those fighting in battle. If they looked like pilgrims or priests clad in white stoles, they would be showing themselves as bringers of peace, not war. Once their work is done, they return to the heavens whence they came, and the bodies, which they had taken so as to make themselves visible, they return to the same matter from which they had received it. Do not wonder that the almighty Creator of all might transmute matter, since he brought all things into being can make it into any other *species* that might please him.[19]

The explanation shows some obvious connection to the contemporary debate about the Eucharist, particularly in its use of terms like *essentia* and *species*. In both cases, a disjuncture exists between a heavenly reality and earthly perception. But whereas the Eucharist maintains the *species* of bread and wine in part not to horrify communicants, the ethereal spirits of the ghost army take on the *species* of warriors so that soldiers on the field may take heart from their appearance and better understand the spirits' function in the world.

In Robert's presentation, Bohemond understands the heavenly soldiers as simple *mira*, while his chaplain – and through the chaplain, Pirrus – recognizes the luminous warriors as *signa*, 'leading men to accept those wonders of faith that are beyond their comprehension'.[20] Theological niceties aside, Bohemond brings their discussion back to practicalities. The Franks had up to that point won one victory after another against seemingly impossible odds. 'To what do you attribute this miracle [*virtutem*], humanity or divinity?'[21] Despite their different perspectives, Bohemond and his priest point towards the same conclusion: The crusade as a whole is the true miracle. Ghost armies are merely ancillary to that principal phenomenon. Small wonder that, when confronted with a warrior's sense of wonder and a chaplain's grasp of semiotics, Pirrus chose to convert and hand his city over to the more virtuous, and hence more marvellous, army.

The ability to see and to describe on both levels – miracle as wonder and miracle as signifier – is what separates a skilful historian from a mere storyteller. As Benedicta

[19] 'Cum omnipotens Creator angelos suos sive iustorum spiritus mittere disponit in terram, tunc assumunt sibi aeria corpora, ut per ea nobis innotescant, qui videri non possunt in spiritualia essentia sua. Ideo armati nunc apparent, ut quia in bello laborantibus auxiliaturi veniunt indicent. Si enim ut peregrini vel ut sacerdotes stolis dealbati apparerent, non bellum sed pacem nuntiarent. Expleto siquidem negotio pro quo veniunt, ad celestia remeant unde venerunt, et corpora que, ut visibiles apparerent, acceperunt, in eamdem reponunt matheriam quam sumpserunt. Nec mireris si omnipotens factor omnium tranmutat matheriam a se facta in quamlibet speciem, qui universa de nichilo adduxit in essentiam'; Ibid., p. 52 [5, 9].

[20] Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 7.

[21] 'Cui hanc virtutem attribuis, humanitati an divinitati?'; Robert *Historia*, p. 52 [5, 9].

Ward has described Bede's hagiographical method, accounts of miracles 'were linked to the virtues and only had significance if they were seen as signs of God's action through those who lived in Christ'.[22] Miracle stories should not just create a sense of wonder, but they should convey higher truths about sanctity and morality. One of our twelfth-century crusade historians, Guibert of Nogent, makes a similar point about miracles. Miracle stories told without higher purpose, he argues in his treatise *On the Relics of Saints*, are merely tall tales, characterized by 'inept absurdity'.[23] Similar to what the chaplain had said in Robert the Monk's story about Bohemond, miracles speak in a symbolic language. Spiritual pilgrims who journey to the afterlife, for example, do not describe the fires of hell or the golden streets of heaven because hell is literally on fire and heaven is literally made of gold. Rather, 'if the visionaries talked of bridges, rivers, and sulphurous odours, and also of pleasant fields and homes built with gold bricks, they did so to draw analogies between the inner world and our present condition'.[24]

Admittedly, it is a lesson that may have been lost on the crusaders themselves. One of the more educated of them, Anselm of Ribemont, reportedly saw in a vision that upon his death, he would receive as a heavenly reward in the afterlife an extremely well-fortified castle. In every way it would excel the ordinary: 'spaciousness, height, building materials, design, strength of fortifications, decoration'.[25] Cleaning up the theology behind this vision is not impossible. God may have wished, again, to communicate heavenly pleasures in ways that an eleventh-century castellan would appreciate. Even the most skilled theologian, however, would have had difficulty justifying why, in another vision, Adhémar of Le Puy had appeared in heaven with much of his hair and beard burned off. Adhémar's head (spiritual and physical) had been badly burned when he had spent a short time in hell, doing penance for having ever doubted the authenticity of the Holy Lance of Antioch. In the heavenly choirs, where he was seen singing alongside St Nicholas, the hair had still not grown back, and the bishop would in fact not be able to see the face of God clearly until it did.[26] The degraded external appearance of a key sign of a warrior's masculinity (and Bishop Adhémar was a warrior as much as a cleric)[27] thus revealed the internal condition of a soul's contemplative failings. Stated another way, we find here what happens when high spirituality mixes with folklore.

Undoubtedly, stories of the supernatural brought back from the Holy Land required a lot of cleaning up from clerics like Baudry, Guibert and Robert. But the

[22] Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990), p. 101.

[23] The story to which Guibert refers concerns a supposed tooth of Christ, whose reliquary reportedly once floated above an altar in the presence of Louis the Pious. Guibert wonders what higher truth this story was meant to convey – that Christ wished to escape from the altar? See Guibert of Nogent, *Monodies and On the Relics of Saints: The Autobiography and a Manifesto of a French Monk from the Time of the Crusades*, trans. Joseph McAlhany and Jay Rubenstein (London: Penguin Classics, 2011), p. 266.

[24] Ibid., p. 274.

[25] 'spatiositas, celsitudo, materia, forma, soliditas, ornatus'; Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi,* RHC *Oc.* 3, 106, p. 681.

[26] Raymond of Aguilers, *Liber*, pp. 84–6 and 116–17.

[27] James A. Brundage, 'Adhémar of Puy. The Bishop and His Critics', *Speculum* 34 (1959), pp. 201–12, and John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill, 'Contemporary Accounts and the later Reputation of Adhémar, Bishop of Le Puy', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 9 (1955), pp. 30–8.

need to polish the rough edges of stories such as these was not the real reason why monks felt justified in composing new narrative histories of the crusade. Rather, the story as a whole needed further explanation and contextualization. By the end of their journey, the crusaders and the clerical writers who had accompanied them had a very clear sense that history had changed as a result of the crusade. But they would have likely been baffled had they tried to explain exactly how it had changed. It was a problem that the second generation of historians, the monastic historians, were better equipped to deal with. Their problem was not so much refining the theology of earlier chronicles but rather refining the entire narrative and giving it its proper historical due.

The best place to observe all of these processes – literary, spiritual and historiographical – at work is in the monks' treatment of the climax of the crusade, the conquest of Jerusalem. Not only the goal of the crusade, Jerusalem was also the classic subject for monastic meditation and for biblical exegesis. Indeed, when explaining the four levels of scriptural meaning, Jerusalem was lesson one. Literally, it is a city in Palestine. Allegorically, it is the church on earth and all its members. Tropologically, Jerusalem is a soul at peace. And anagogically, it is the heavenly city that shall appear at the end of time.[28] Of the three monastic chroniclers, one of them, Guibert of Nogent, was a fairly prolific exegete. Half of his surviving work is biblical exegesis.[29] Baudry of Bourgueil is not known for exegesis, though in an epistolary exchange with Abbot Peter of Maillezais, he asks his friend to lend him a copy of a commentary on the Pentateuch.[30] If Peter sends him the book, he promises, 'I will insert sentences between the lines and draw out the marrow that lies concealed within it.'[31] Baudry adds that he is sending Peter a copy of 'the little book I have just written about the journey to Jerusalem'.[32] Baudry himself may not have been a skilled exegete, but he did imagine that exegetical texts and crusade histories travelled comfortably along the same codicological roads.

And Baudry brought these precise intellectual tools to bear on the first sentence, indeed the first word, of his history:

> Jerusalem – capital of Judea, a city neither unworthy nor unknown, adorned so often with such great kingly ornaments, so often besieged by tyrannical enemies, razed to the ground and deprived of her children when they were led into captivity, having endured the myriad historical upheavals before the advent of the Saviour, they know it – both those who have read lightly through the works

[28] See Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale, les quatre sens de l'Écriture* 1 (Paris: Aubier, 1959), p. 37. Guibert makes use of this formula in his treatise, *Liber quo ordine sermo fieri debeat*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medieualis 127 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), p. 53.

[29] Guibert's *Moralia in Genesim* appears in Patrolgia Latina 156, cols. 19–338. Half of his *Tropologies* on the Minor Prophets are in the same volume, cols. 337–488. The other half is unpublished.

[30] All observations about Baudry as historian necessarily await the new edition of his crusade chronicle: *The* Historia Ierosolimitana *of Baldric of Bourgueil*, ed. S. J. Biddlecombe (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014).

[31] 'Apponam siquidem et sententias interlineares, et excerptam sicubi latent medullas interiores'; Baudry, *Historia*, p. 6, and pp. 5–8 more generally. The correspondence serves as the introduction to the RHC edition of Baudry; the manuscript on which the letters are based is lost.

[32] 'Libellum quem de Jerosolimitano itinere quoquo modo composui'; Baudry, *Historia*, p. 6.

> of history and those who have lent ears hungry to learn how to calculate the passage of time.[33]

Understanding the First Crusade thus demanded an understanding not just of current events, but of how Jerusalem fit into the fundamental structures of history, a point with which Guibert and Robert would have readily agreed. Without naming names, Guibert compares himself in his capacity as a crusade historian to Josephus; the eleventh-century wars, he writes, deserve, 'if dare I say it, to be related with more gravitas than all the histories of the Jewish Wars'.[34] Bolder still, Robert opens his chronicle by calling to mind the historical writings of Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David. 'For after the Creation of the world, what deed is more wonderful, with the exception of the mystery of the salvific cross, than what happened in our times during the journey of our Jerusalemites?'[35] Jerusalem, the centre of the earth, the fulcrum of history, and the place of man's salvation, needed a thorough treatment, both historical and exegetical. That was the fundamental task of the monks: to place the story of the crusade into the proper context of the history of Jerusalem and the history of salvation.

The details of what happened in Jerusalem in the days around 15 July 1099, however, would seem on the face of it to offer little of spiritual value.[36] In brief, the killing of the garrison occurred over the course of three days. On the first day, the Franks broke through Jerusalem's defences and undertook a general massacre of the garrison, along with much of the city's population. But the destruction was not complete. Besides the survivors who managed to hide themselves during the worst of the fighting, at least two collections of Muslim warriors successfully negotiated surrenders. One of them, of indeterminate number, sealed in the Tower of David, ransomed themselves to the Provençal leader Raymond of Saint-Gilles and quickly left for the Egyptian city of Ascalon. The other group of around 300 Muslims took refuge on the roof of al-Aqsa Mosque and accepted banners of protection from the Norman crusader Tancred. But not all the Franks were happy about these arrangements. The next morning, on 16 July, several of them climbed atop al-Aqsa (known to them as the Temple of Solomon)

[33] 'Jerusalem, totius Judaeae metropolim, non ignobilem nec ignotam civitatem, regalibus honorificentiis in immensum multotiens decoratam, multotiens a tyrannis hostibus obsessam, et ad solam usque dirutam et a propriis filiis in captivitatem abductis orbatam, variasque temporum tumultuationes ante Salvatoris adventum perpessam, noverunt vel qui historiographorum libros saltem tenuiter legerunt, vel qui computantium relationi aures audiendi avidas accommodaverunt'; Baudry, *Historia* 4, 1, 1, p. 11. I am perhaps translating aggressively the phrase *computantium relationi*. It seems clear, however, that Baudry wishes to contrast two types of readers – one lightly interested in history and one who reads history somewhat obsessively. The latter seems characterized by a fascination for calculation, presumably of dates. An example of the latter type of reader, who was a contemporary of Baudry's, would be Lambert of Saint-Omer, whom I have discussed in Jay Rubenstein, 'Lambert of Saint-Omer and the Apocalyptic First Crusade', in Nicholas Paul and Suzanne Yeager (eds.), *Remembering the Crusades: Myth, Image, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), pp. 69–95.

[34] 'maiori, si dicere audeam, quam omnes belli Iudaici Historias maturitate dignum digeri'; Guibert, *Dei gesta*, p. 81. Baudry mentions Josephus by name in the opening to his *Historia*: 1, 1, p. 11.

[35] 'Sed post creationem mundi quid mirabilius factus est preter salutifere crucis mysterium, quam quod modernis temporibus actum est in hoc itinere nostrorum Iherosolimitanorum?'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 4 [*prologus*]. Noted as well by Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, p. 140.

[36] Reconstructed thoroughly and most convincingly by Benjamin Z. Kedar, 'The Jerusalem Massacres of July 1099 in the Western Historiography of the Crusades', *Crusades* 3 (2004), pp. 15–76.

and systematically killed all prisoners. According to the *Gesta Francorum*, Tancred was furious about what had happened, though whether because of the needless slaughter or because he had lost his ransoms the compiler does not specify.[37] In any case, on the third day, 17 July, the Frankish leaders agreed that the only fair way to deal with any lingering controversies about prisoners and ransoms was to kill all of the surviving Muslims, regardless of age or gender, leaving only a few survivors to help dispose of the corpses.[38]

Modern historians have ingeniously tried to minimize the scale of these events, to say that the killing of the garrison in Jerusalem was only an example of the application of the normal rules of war.[39] But the crusaders would not have agreed. They believed that their violence had been without precedent. In the words of the *Gesta Francorum*, 'No one has ever heard or seen of such a slaughter of a pagan people, for pyres of their bodies were arranged as if road markers, and none but God knows how many bodies there were.'[40] Around al-Aqsa, the compiler elaborates, in perhaps the single most famous line about the crusades, 'There was such a massacre that our men's feet were splashing through blood up to their ankles.'[41] It is an indelible image – a probable exaggeration, but nonetheless a real attempt to capture what seemed unimagined slaughter. Philippe Buc has helpfully defined this image as an example of the sublime in literature, a moment 'bathed in the splendour of God's sublime justice'.[42] The pools of blood filling Jerusalem's streets, intended no doubt to inspire shock in readers, could also equally create a sense of awe. In its grandeur and spectacle, the massacre was another piece of evidence of the miracle that was the crusade.

Baudry, Guibert and Robert not only accepted the grisly imagery of the *Gesta Francorum*, but they embellished it. The blood did not simply flow around the Franks' ankles. Baudry raises it to their shins: 'No one knows the number of those killed, but their blood, as it flowed through the Temple, touched the calves of those walking through it.'[43] Guibert at first keeps the blood ankle-deep, though he speaks approvingly of an 'effusion of human gore', before observing matter-of-factly,

[37] *Gesta*, p. 92.

[38] Albert, *Historia*, 6, 30, pp. 440–3. Albert of Aachen is the only writer to mention this third day of killing, but Albert had unusually good sources for his book. On Albert as historian, see Susan B. Edgington, 'Albert of Aachen Reappraised', in Alan V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095–1500*, International Medieval Research 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 55–67.

[39] The most vocal proponent of 'normalizing' the 1099 massacre of Jerusalem is John France, notably in his book *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. p. 355. His arguments have been systematically dismantled by Kedar, 'Jerusalem Massacre', esp. pp. 56 and 68.

[40] 'Tales occisiones de paganorum gente nullus unquam audiuit nec uidit; quoniam pyrae erant ordinatae ex eis sicut metae, et nemo scit numerum eorum nisi solus Deus'; *Gesta*, p. 92.

[41] 'Ibique talis occisio fuit, ut nostri in sanguine illorum pedes usque ad cauillas mitterent'; *Gesta*, p. 91.

[42] Philippe Buc, 'Martyrdom in the West: Vengeance, Purge, Salvation, and History', in N. H. Petersen, E. Østrem, and A. Bücker (eds.), *Resonances: Historical Essays on Continuity and Change* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. 44; also Buc *Martyrdom, Terror, and Holy War: Medieval genealogies of violence in the West, ca. 70 CE to ca. 2003 CE* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).

[43] 'Numerum eorum qui perempti sunt nemo novit; sed sanguis eorum, qui per templum defluebat, usque ad suras ambulantium attingebat'; Baudry, *Historia*, 4, 14, p. 102.

'Such good fortune thus followed [the Franks].'[44] A little later, he suggests that the blood got so high that it seeped through the tops of the Franks' boots.[45] But no writer delighted in the carnage more than did Robert the Monk. Of the killing around the Temple Mount, he observes, 'Such was the outpouring of human blood that a wave of blood carried the bodies of the men who had been cut down, rolling them down the streets so that arms or dismembered hands floated atop the gore and joined up to other bodies, making it so that no one could say whose arm had attached itself to which mutilated body.' Still, it was God's work, and Robert offered no sympathy for the butchered, but only for the crusaders who had had to work in such difficult conditions: 'The knights who carried out this executioner's task were hardly able to endure the clouds of hot gore emanating around them.'[46] In a strange inversion of the idea of the transformative power of Christ's blood, the blood of Muslims became a cleansing agent that purged Jerusalem of the pollution created by the Muslims themselves. It is not refined theology, but it is a visceral image capable of appealing to both monastic and secular warriors.

Alongside the bloodshed, each of the monastic writers developed a moral theme connected to Jerusalem, all of them taking the literal slaughter of 15 July into the realm of moral reform. Baudry, for example, wove the idea of love throughout his narrative. The decision is not surprising. Baudry was known less as a historian in his own day and more as a poet, his verses characterized by an Ovidian, amatory sensibility.[47] As such, Baudry presents the crusade in terms approaching the proto-chivalric. The observation applies both to particular incidents and to grand ideas. In terms of the former, Bohemond's relationship with the traitor Pirrus verges on the romantic. Or at least Baudry imagines the warriors engaging in the kind of love talk characteristic of monastic epistolary exchange.[48] In terms of grand ideas, Jerusalem, in Baudry's analysis, is an imprisoned woman, waiting for knights errant to liberate her. When the Frankish army finally arrived before the city walls in the summer of 1099, they 'besieged her not in order that they might capture a free woman, but in order that they might free a captive'.[49] The army inspired Baudry to similar flights of exegetical fancy, again merging allegorical and amatory language. 'To put it briefly, that army [*militia*] was the image and form of a beautiful church, such that I might justly suppose that Solomon had sung of it: "Behold you are as beautiful, my friend, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of

[44] 'cruoris effusio . . . istac quidem res ea prosperitate processit'; Guibert, *Dei gesta*, 7, 7, p. 279.

[45] Ibid., 7, 8, p. 281.

[46] 'Tantum ibi humani sanguinis effusum est, quia cesorum corpora unda sanguinis impellente, volvebantur per pavimentum, et brachia sive truncate manus super cruorem fluitabant cuius erat corporis brachium, quod truncato corpori erat adiunctum. Ipsi etiam milites qui hoc carnificium operabantur, exhalentes calidi cruoris nebulas vix patiebantur'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 99 [9, 8].

[47] See, for example, Gerald Bond, '"Iocus amoris": the poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Formation of the Ovidian Subculture', *Traditio* 42 (1986), pp. 143–93; and C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 71–3 and 94–101.

[48] For example, Baudry, *Historia*, 2, 19, p. 53, where they address each other as *mi carissime*, and where Pirrus further effuses, 'animam in manibus unici mei pono'. See also Rebecca L. Slitt, 'Justifying Cross-Cultural Friendship: Bohemond, Firuz, and the Fall of Antioch', *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 38 (2007), pp. 339–49.

[49] 'Obsederunt igitur eam, non ut liberam captivarent, sed ut captivam liberarent'; Baudry, *Historia*, 4, 9, p. 97.

Solomon."'[50] This use of the Song of Songs, merging verses 1.4 and 1.14, reveals Baudry as an early member of the monastic intellectual circles studied by Jean Leclerq, men devoted equally to Ovid and Solomon.[51] In any case, for Baudry, Jerusalem, the church, and the crusading host as a whole were united in a common symbolic language of love, where secular, romantic impulses served as signs that pointed towards a higher contemplative affection.

Guibert's interpretation of Jerusalem is at once less emotive and more sophisticated. As was the case with Guibert's other writings, such as his Moral Commentary on Genesis or his autobiographical memoirs, the crusade provided Guibert the opportunity to showcase his facility at psychological thought. Knights do not just enter battle piously; they do so 'having carved the sign of the cross onto their devout minds'.[52] The army as a whole, in Guibert's reading, was like a Christian soul struggling against unruly emotions, always being held up for judgement before God, 'the faithful witness to the inner world'.[53] Such constant spiritual self-evaluation was essential for the crusade, for what separated it from other wars, what defined its many military engagements as 'holy battles',[54] were the *intentiones* of the soldiers. Pure motives, even in the midst of killing, separated them from warriors of old – both the Israelites and the pagan heroes of Antiquity.[55] Crusaders fought with the fearlessness not of raging lions, but of martyrs.[56] On one level, there is nothing particularly original in what Guibert says here. The use of battlefield imagery to describe spiritual struggle, and vice versa, was rooted in Prudentius's *Psychomachia* and is one of the most fundamental themes in monastic writing.[57] The genius of Guibert's presentation, however, is the way in which he deliberately superimposes the 'mystical narrative'[58] of Christian conversion onto the story of the crusade. The goal of a Christian soul is spiritual peace, exegetically symbolized by Jerusalem. The goal of the crusaders is likewise Jerusalem, a place where, according to Guibert, passions – which had once 'knotted the guts and driven to ruin the thoughts of the crusaders'[59] – departed altogether from the Franks' hearts.[60] The Augustinian pilgrimage from the city of man to the city of God had become real. Allegory and tropology joined together in literal current events – for Guibert, perhaps the crusade's greatest miracle.

Unlike his two contemporaries, Robert the Monk did not weave a single theme or concept throughout his narrative. He is too focused upon the simple telling events

[50] 'Ut breviter dicam, militia illa ecclesiae formosae instar erat et forma, ut de tali non temerarius Salomonem decantasse autumaverim: *Ecce tu pulchra es amica mea, sicut tabernacula Cedar, sicut pelles Salomonis*'; Baudry, *Historia*, 1, 24, p. 28.

[51] Jean Leclercq, *L'amour vu par les moines au XIIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1983).

[52] 'exsculpto piis in mentibus crucis signo'; Guibert, *Dei gesta* 6, 20, p. 258.

[53] Guibert addresses God as, 'O bone internorum cognitor'; *Dei gesta* 3, 10, p. 156. I have discussed these themes in Jay Rubenstein, *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind* (New York, Routledge, 2002), pp. 98–100.

[54] 'praelia sancta'; ibid., 1, 1, p. 87.

[55] Ibid., 5, 24, pp. 226–7; 6, 9, p. 240; and 7, prologue, p. 266.

[56] Ibid., 3, 10, pp. 156–7.

[57] Smith, *War and Monastic Culture*, pp. 123–5.

[58] The phrase *mystica narratio* is Guibert's, from his *Moralia in Genesim*, col. 61B.

[59] 'Viscerum strages, cerebri ruinas passio fecit'; Guibert, *Dei gesta*, 3, 6, p. 178.

[60] 'fugitque pectus omne passio'; ibid., 7, 14, p. 289.

to 'obscure obvious points through the use of philosophy'.[61] But even Robert, as he sums up the crusade saga, cannot resist a little exegetical wordplay. After describing the grisly details of the siege of Jerusalem and the battle of Ascalon, he concludes, without irony, 'For Jerusalem, in our language, means *peaceful*.'[62] He then adds, a bit more eccentrically, 'if our authors had wished not to call it *Jerusalem*, but had changed the *r* into an *s*, then it would be called *Jesusalem*, rendered in our parlance *peaceful salvation*'.[63] As Jehangir Malegam reminds us, the First Crusade falls in the middle of one of the most creative periods of debate in medieval Europe about the meaning of peace, an era indeed characterized by 'an overabundance of concerns for its definition'.[64] Robert's own concept of peace is for the most part traditional. It can refer, for example, to the Peace of God: The Saracens are, in Robert's presentation, inveterate breakers of the peace, either in their disrespect for places of sanctuary, their harassment and torture of unarmed pilgrims, or in their willingness to break what was an ultimately ill-conceived truce with the Franks during the siege of Antioch.[65] It can refer to a simple absence of violence, as when, in the aftermath of the siege of Antioch, the Franks enjoyed their period of 'highest peace'.[66] In reference to Jerusalem, however, the 'city of the peaceful name',[67] Robert's interpretation of peace is a bit subtler, combining the contemplative tranquillity of Guibert with the literal cessation of hostilities that followed the battles of Jerusalem and Ascalon.

But it was a peace with a greater temporal and semiotic reach, the moment when, according to Robert, 'there was fulfilled in actuality, concerning the church of the faithful, what is said by Isaiah in spiritual language: *Mountains and hills will sing praise unto you*'. The divine praises foretold in Isaiah 55:12, Robert explains, were sung 'now by heavenly, not earthly, mountains'.[68] Isaiah also seemed to have foretold the end crusade when he wrote, 'The *Sepulchre* of the Lord will be *glorious*.'[69] With an almost eerie precision, the prophet had written, 'The sons of pilgrims will build your walls, and their kings will tend to you.'[70] Isaiah had also proclaimed how the gates of the city of Sion would one day stand open day and night, and that all just people who cleave to the truth will enter it.[71] 'In prophetic books,' Robert observes, 'I have found these and many other such passages which are in accord with this liberation that has occurred in

[61] 'aperta philsophando obnubilare'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 3 [*Apologeticus sermo*].
[62] 'Ierusalem autem in nostro sermone pacifica transfertur'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 109 [9, 26].
[63] 'quia si nostris placuisset auctoribus, non Ierusalem, sed R in S mutata Iesusalem debuisset vocari, et sic in nostro eloquio salus pacifica interpretari'; ibid., p. 110 [9, 26].
[64] Jehangir Yezdi Malegam, *The Sleep of Behemoth: Disputing Peace and Violence in Medieval Europe, 1000–1200* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 15, and more generally pp. 9–20.
[65] This satirical image of Muslims as violators of peace underlies Robert's version of Urban II's sermon at Clermont at *Historia*, p. 5 [1, 1]; about the breaking of the truce of Antioch when the Turks murder a knight named Walo, Robert writes, 'Heheu! Morte Gualonis pax infringitur'; ibid., p. 50 [5, 6]. Also, Malegam, *Sleep of Behemoth*, pp. 27–42.
[66] 'summa pax'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 81 [7, 23].
[67] 'urbe pacifici nominis'; Robert, *Historia*, p. 101 [9, 10].
[68] 'realiter implebatur quod spiritualiter per Isaiam de ecclesia fidelium dicitur: *Montes et colles cantabunt coram vobis laudem* . . . non iam a terrenis montibus, sed a celestibus'; Ibid., p. 109 [9, 24].
[69] Isa. 11.10 reads, 'erit sepulchrum ejus gloriosum'. Cited by Robert at *Historia*, p. 100 [9, 9].
[70] Isa. 60.10, cited by Robert at *Historia*, p. 110 [9, 26].
[71] Isa. 60.11 and 26.1-2, cited by Robert at *Historia*, pp. 109–10 [9, 26].

our age.'[72] One better understands why Robert was earlier able to say that, in salvation history, the crusade was on a par with Creation and the Crucifixion. These are not just prophetic images, but images of a lasting peace, the kind a contemplative Christian would expect to arise at the end of all time. And the expression Robert uses here for 'our age', *etatibus nostris*, does suggest that he is writing in a prophetic key, calling to mind the classic 'six ages' of salvation history. If so, Robert would not be the first historical thinker to frame his book around the idea of six ages. Benedicta Ward has shown that the same structure underlies the structure of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.[73]

The idea of an endless peace seemed tantalizingly close, not only to Robert but to Baudry and Guibert, as well. Baudry imagined the amir of Egypt, after his defeat at Ascalon, effectively surrendering to the Franks: 'Whatever may happen,' the emir laments, 'one thing is certain: I will never again rise up against them. Better for me to return to my own country, there to dwell in shame as long as I live.'[74] Guibert may not have been quite so optimistic, but he could nonetheless imagine a time when the kings of Jerusalem would unite all the kingdoms of the earth under their rule – probably a deliberate echo of the famous Last World Emperor prophecy.[75] He writes, in a celebratory poem, thus:

> This city, often made plunder to kings,
> Had known complete and utter destruction;
> O, city, by this blessed conquest,
> You deservedly ought to rule.
> You should draw to you Christian kingdoms,
> And you will see the glories of this world come here
> And give thanks to you, as their mother.[76]

The idea of a lasting earthly peace was, Guibert knew (as surely did Baudry and Robert) an exegetical impossibility. One of the defining characteristics of true contemplative peace is that it is ephemeral.[77] But for a brief moment in the early twelfth century an impossible peace at all levels seemed genuinely achievable.[78]

[72] 'Hec et multa alia invenimus in propheticis libris, que congruunt huic liberationi facte etatibus nostris'; Ibid., p. 110 [9, 26].

[73] Ward, *Venerable Bede*, pp. 114–16.

[74] 'Quicquid sit, unum erit: in eos denuo non erigar, sed potius ad patriam meam ignominiosus donec vixero revertar'; Baudry, *Historia* 4, 21, p. 110. One of Baudry's earliest copyists spotted the potential embarrassment from this passage (given that wars with Egypt continued unabated) and excised it from the text. It survives in only two of the 14 manuscripts I have examined.

[75] On the impact of the Last World Emperor legend, Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Anne A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

[76] 'Urbs ista, sepe preda facta regibus,/pessum dabatur obruenda funditus;/hac o beata captione civitas,/hinc promerens ut imperare debeas/ad teque regna christiana contrahas/videbis orbis huc venire glorias/tibique matris exhibere gratias'; Guibert, *Dei gesta*, 7, 14, pp. 289–90.

[77] Guibert, in this respect, shows himself a student of Gregory the Great, the structure of whose thought is beautifully articulated by Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), esp. pp. 107–27.

[78] On the connections between eschatological peace and bloodshed, see the comments in Malegam, *Sleep of Behemoth*, pp. 213–14.

For our monastic historians, this was the miracle of the First Crusade. Setting aside the seemingly impossible character of the Franks' military victory, as well as the numerous signs, visions, and saintly apparitions that adorn their chronicles, the real wonder of the event was that it had collapsed all levels of meaning and history into one. The literal Jerusalem was restored to its rightful place as heart of the church, the church being the allegorical Jerusalem, while in the process the crusade had helped Christendom's most ferocious warriors gain a measure of the spiritual peace, which defines the tropological Jerusalem, even as the crusade seemed to usher in the Last Days and with them, the anagogical Jerusalem. Such was the noble and marvellous theme that learnt monks pondered, and whose essence they sought to capture in worthy language and in books of true history.

14

Reading Saints' Lives, in the Light of Miracle Stories in John of Forde's *Life of Wulfric of Haselbury*[1]

Pauline Matarasso

Throughout the Middle Ages miracles . . . formed an integral part of daily life.[2]

Indeed. And over and beyond, miracle stories formed a prerequisite of medieval Saints' Lives, since saints were authenticated by their miracles, then as now. Such stories are however not popular with modern readers, who find them hard to engage with, while scholars, who recognize their importance as a field of study, have often sidelined the faith dimension to approach them as source material for the analysis of human behaviour and the social conditions thought to have prevailed in a given time and place. In the light of miracle stories the gulf opened up between 'them' and 'us' by the Enlightenment and subsequent extraordinary advances in scientific knowledge appears too wide for anything but a *dialogue de sourds*.

The first problem to present itself is that of language: there is a paucity of neutral words. Anchorite is one such: it describes a way of life. Holy man, to take the term favoured by medieval authors, is freighted, it involves a value judgement, and Saints' Lives address the ultimate in value judgements: establishing the sanctity (itself indefinable in scientific terms) of an individual. If there is little neutral vocabulary for analysing this, there is no shortage of negative expressions: superstition, ignorance, self-delusion, wishful thinking, hysteria. No longer current in academic work, they still hover in the background of our minds, and indeed have, along with fraudulence, their proper place in the analysis of religious and other phenomena. A small number of terms found in the literature around folklore retain a fluidity which can make them appear neutral, though in fact they have no scientific credentials: second sight is an example. Liminal,

[1] The only current edition of this work is that by Maurice Bell, *The Life of Wulfric of Haselbury by John, Abbot of Ford* (Somerset Record Society 37), 1933. Quotations in English and references [bk., ch.] are to *John of Forde, the Life of Wulfric of Haselbury, Anchorite*, Pauline Matarasso (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press, 2011). Quotations in Latin have been checked and where necessary accorded with the Eton manuscript 109 E.

[2] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind. Theory, Record and Event, 1000–1215* (London: The Scolar Press, 1982).

borrowed from anthropology where it describes a transitional state in rites of passage, was extended to cover the paradoxical position of medieval anchorites – at once part of and apart from the social set-up of their time – and has been used by scholars to explore their function. Liminal is a convenient term, but 'transitional' implies a before and an after or, in a religious context, two realities: time and eternity, human and divine – one cannot be on the threshold of nothing. Even the word hagiography has acquired a subtext that does it no service, while edify has long lost the roots it had in *aedificare* and has sickened and died in consequence. Interestingly, the words 'miracle' and 'miraculous' migrated at some point across the frontiers of belief and are now perfectly acceptable on condition of being divorced from any idea of divine agency – they have been handed back to the goddess Fortune.

Despite these problems of language, which translate deeper problems of perception, recent scholarly studies have shown a shift away from the socio-historical approach to medieval saints, whether coenobites or hermits, and a linked readiness to admit and explore a spiritual dimension to their life and Lives.[3] Given that these studies include wide-spectrum overviews, what, one might ask, can be added by looking at a single text? The answer, I think, lies less in looking than in listening. In works which present themselves as truthful and are rarely if ever believed, authorial voices need to be listened to, if necessary again and again, as the surest way of establishing or destroying trust.[4]

John of Forde, who wrote the *Life* of the anchorite Wulfric of Haselbury between 1180 and 1184, is his own best witness, and a good one for us, in part because of his openness on the page, in part because the pattern of his life is clear. Most of that long life (c. 1145–1214) was spent as a Cistercian monk, almost wholly at Forde, where he held for more than 20 years the office of abbot. Not only is nothing discreditable known of him, he was widely employed by the order in settling disputes and held for 3 years the thankless position of confessor to his royal namesake. He also took on himself the task, no doubt endorsed by General Chapter, of completing the commentary on the Song of Songs begun by St Bernard and continued by Gilbert of Swineshead. John was a man of forty or so when he wrote the *Life of Wulfric*, his first work, and had had ample opportunity to learn from the scholarly Baldwin, first of Forde, later of Worcester and Canterbury.

Wulfric had been dead for 30 years when John completed his *Life,* but the latter had been listening to the stories current at Forde ever since he entered.[5] It was only eight miles from Forde to Haselbury, where Wulfric had lived from 1125 to 1155 in a cell built onto the church, and some of the monks had been regular visitors. In one of two dedicatory letters John declares that he has written the *Life* 'to glorify God and build up

[3] The introduction to Michael Goodich's last work offers an excellent summary of the problems in addressing hagiographical material, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150–1350* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 1–7.

[4] Susan Ridyard's attentive listening to Godric of Finchale has given us a sensitive exploration of one hermit's interaction with his visitors, which clearly has a wider relevance. 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse Revisited: The Case of Godric of Finchale', in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds.), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, (Oxford: OUP, 2001), pp. 236–50.

[5] Three stories came to John from one Richard, the son of a local priest, who worked as scribe for the anchorite and also for the monastery of Forde. See below, p. 223.

the church' – we are back to *aedificare* – but I suspect that fascination with the stories played a big part.[6] John is a gifted teller of stories, and tellers are also good listeners, so with the permission of his abbot and the support of the bishop of Exeter, he set about gathering and organizing his material.[7]

In contrast to the usual pattern where miracle stories arise from the conjunction of pilgrims and a saint's shrine, those recounted of Wulfric by John, with only two exceptions, preceded his death. What one might term his afterlife was cut off before it began when the monks of nearby Montacute arrived in strength to carry off the body awaiting burial in the cell. The parish priest and villagers held on to their saint, but persistent anxiety caused Osbern the priest to rebury the body twice within the church, the second time in a spot 'known only to God and himself'. The stream of visitors dried up when there was nothing to visit and within a generation John could write, 'today it is as though he had never been'. Wulfric continued however an underground life in local memory, and it became John's aim to disinter definitively the saint who had been revered as a wonder-worker within a few years of his enclosure. Encouragement in the form of example was amply provided by a flurry of saints' lives written in the years immediately preceding, including that of the hermit Godric of Finchale, like Wulfric a recluse of common English stock,[8] as well as works both by and about Cistercian abbots of the first generation. In all of these, miracle stories played a greater or lesser part. That John had no interest in the success of his venture is accepted:[9] neither he nor his monastery stood to gain by any cult that might ensue, and his being whiter in that respect than many other hagiographers adds value to his testimony.

John's understanding of Wulfric's miracles as the fruits of his commerce with God – providing also its confirmation and its seal of authenticity – comes from his formation in Schools and cloister, primarily the second, the twelfth-century revival of interest in science passed him by.[10] The miracles themselves he receives from the oral tradition as stories in which he delights, stories that serve as a currency of exchange for deeper truths. He stands too at that juncture where the evolving, spoken word passes into the fixed state of the written – more, he himself is the transforming medium, setting, like bright miniatures, the told stories in a learnt context of reflective commentary. Curiously, it is we who dub them 'miracle' stories; John has a strange distaste for the term. In the course of some hundred such tales, he uses the word *miraculum* five times. A true monastic, it is to Scripture that he goes for words of meaning, preferring combinations of *signum, virtus, potentia, opus, and gloria*, and ending the first miracle story of the *Life* (a challenging marriage of the persuasive and the incredible) with the words that close the Gospel account of the wedding at Cana: 'This was the first of the signs that blessed Wulfric worked' [Jn 2. 11].

[6] On the currency of miracle stories in Cistercian abbeys and their use as teaching tools, see Brian Patrick McGuire, 'Friends and Tales in the Cloister: Oral Sources in Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum*', *Analecta Cisterciensia,* XXXVI (1980), 2, pp. 167–215.

[7] For the dating and countenancing of the work, see *Life*, as above, n. 1, Introduction, 10–18.

[8] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de vita et miraculis s. Godrici, heremitae de Finchale,* ed. J. Stevenson (London: Surtees Society, 1847).

[9] Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', *History* 60 (1975), p. 338.

[10] There is nothing to suggest that he studied farther afield than Exeter, or that he was familiar with the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, or the *Quaestiones naturales* of Adelard of Bath, which explore the nature of the miraculous and contributed to a tightening of its definition.

Witnessing to truth

All presuppositions laid aside, our reading of Saints' Lives will be guided by how we rate the credibility of the author and his witnesses. In John of Forde we are favoured with an author who gives lavishly of himself. He confides to his readers not only his admiration, his affection even, for his subject, but also his doubts and hesitations, along with comments that sometimes suggest he is thinking on the page, and of course his reflections on the spiritual life. We end up knowing John quite well, and because he is a man of empathy we learn to know a number of his witnesses, among whom we must include Wulfric, since he, as John remarks, often bears witness to himself. A man who prizes discretion, John draws a charitable veil more than once over matters he deems extraneous to his theme (historians of course regret this). He chooses his principal witnesses with care and, where he doesn't know them personally, will get them checked out, once sending 'three of our most trusted brothers' on separate occasions to verify a miracle reported to have taken place 15 years after Wulfric's death.[11]

John is a humble man whom it would be hard not to trust. A statement of his might be challenged, but not on the grounds of a wish to deceive. The difficulty lies elsewhere. Postmodernism is on the side of Pilate, whereas for John truth is an absolute, incarnate in the person of Christ and guaranteed by the inerrancy of Scripture. Here is John of Forde establishing the truth of a story told him by an anchorite he knew:

> A man who has kept from youth to a holy way of life tells the story I am about to write and calls as witness to it Truth in person, whose presence in his testimony we do not question as the anchorite lives with Him in intimate friendship.[12] [2, 27]

There is no discussing that: it can only be accepted or rejected, and even if it were accepted, there would remain questions of applicability and criteria that John had not the means of addressing. It is this same touchstone that John uses, more problematically, to establish the veracity of Wulfric as witness to himself. He accepts that Wulfric on occasion blew his own trumpet, or at the least took pleasure in talking of what a holy man might have been expected to keep to himself. His explanation is as radical as it is unexpected:

> Amidst all this the man of God stood filled with such humility and so grounded in simplicity, that, the more remarkable the signs, the more firmly he cleaved to the truth, counting the signs for nothing.[13]

There is a psychological truth there, to be accepted or not. The matter is not presented as clear-cut, rather as John's considered view: he is aware that saints are also sinners

[11] 3, 47; see also a similar instance in 3, 17.

[12] '. . . et huius rei testem invocat ipsam veritatem, quam ei in testimonium non credimus defuturam cum sit ei familiarissimus', 2, 27. John uses a similar conflation of human and divine in the introductory Letter [*Prologus*] to Bartholomew: 'ex ea nimirum fidei regula qua dicenti credimus quoniam ipse est principium qui et loquitur nobis', Jn 8. 25.

[13] '. . . ut quod ipsis signis insignius est veritati solidius inherens, signa pro nichilo reputaret'. 1, 11. See also the whole of 1, 13.

and Wulfric is allowed his warts.[14] Indeed, one might say of John, as of Caesarius of Heisterbach a generation later: 'The closer he gets to people, the less he deals with the superficial miracle and the more he goes into personalities.'[15]

Like the rest of John's witnesses, Wulfric too was 'telling stories': he passed on God's dealings with him to the spiritually minded in order to check his interpretation of these happenings, to tease out meaning and, no doubt, to share his own amazement. It was part of his work in 'the unveiling of God's mysteries'.[16] Knowledge of God was transmitted in Scripture through stories, in life through happenings, which were also stories. Both Scripture and life had to be read metaphorically: from letter and from fact one proceeded to meaning.

Since Scripture is true, being the word of God, who is Truth, by tying an anecdote together with cords of Scripture John was also reinforcing its truth, if undermining its reality. If the present life is all a seeming, a veil across the eternal, truth itself becomes fluid. Many a jongleur has begun his recitation by saying that there were to his knowledge different versions of this *chanson*, but that his was the true one; not because he had any more facts at his disposal, but because his interpretation and his art gave the story a truth that today might be termed artistic, or human – possibly spiritual. Film directors justify in similar terms works that purport to be historical but which deliberately misrepresent the facts. The directors claim artistic truth, which just happens to run parallel to the interests of commerce – not a million miles from some of the claims and practices at medieval shrines.

But John has other criteria for validating his witnesses. He recommends them to us as being of good repute – a man of good standing in his community, a woman well-respected[17] – but nothing commends them quite as much as age. Old age as a guarantee of dependability[18] is developed at length by John in a chapter devoted to Walter of Glastonbury, the son of Wulfric's lay patron, who entered that well-known monastery with the anchorite's encouragement:

> There he has lived ever since without drawing a murmur of criticism – held indeed in high favour – and there he flourishes still in ripe old age, ready to give an account of the deeds of blessed Wulfric to all who ask. . .and preserved by both profession and age from any suspicion of untruth. For the upshot is that a good and simple man is ashamed to lie, and in a monk it is utterly unbecoming. What is more, it is deceitful, wicked and abominable for a witness to the truth, brought forward to give testimony to that truth, to side with falsehood and uphold a lie. [3, 38].

[14] Two stories in particular trouble John: that of the cursing of the cellarer of Montacute [2, 15] and one where Wulfric remains adamant in refusing to see a man apparently seeking forgiveness [3, 1]. In both cases John wrestles bravely and intelligently with the difficulties the stories pose a hagiographer; equally brave is his decision to include them in the first place.

[15] McGuire, 'Friends and tales . . .' p. 194.

[16] Letter to Bartholomew, *Life*, p. 92.

[17] This insistence on the trustworthiness of one's witnesses is, unsurprisingly, common to collectors of miracle stories, and became *de rigueur* in cases of canonization. Already in 1167 Walter Daniel was crossly fending off a challenge to the miracle stories in his account of Aelred's life by furnishing a list of witnesses. See 'The Letter to Maurice', in Walter Daniel, *The Life of Aelred of Rievaulx* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1994), pp. 147–54.

[18] 'Wisdom is found in the old, and discretion comes with great age', Job, 12.12.

The limitations of this are obvious. No account is taken of the fact that events are refracted through the personality and in consequence the memory of the witness. The possibility of self-deception, if not outside John's experience, has not been integrated into any system enabling analysis. Provided a person was honest, all that that person bore witness to could be trusted, and this extended to memories of past events distilled over decades, frequently rehearsed and inevitably coloured by hindsight. Walter of Glastonbury was the purveyor of many of these tales and was, for John, the repository of the oral archive of the FitzWalter family: his father's distinctive voice is mediated through him. The well-known story of the cutting of the hauberk opens a narrow window on the process.

William FitzWalter and the cutting of the hauberk: The incredible story

When Wulfric's vocation to the solitary life declared itself, William FitzWalter, lord of several manors in Somerset, whose household chaplain he was at the time, offered him a cell a stone's throw from his hall at Haselbury, adding later, at Wulfric's request, the gift of a hauberk – to be the subject of the first miracle story of the *Life*, which saw Wulfric break 'like a new and saving dawn on the consciousness of humankind' [1, 9].

It was this story that opened to Wulfric a page in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum,* the only contemporary chronicle to mention him, and it figures in the earliest version, written within 10 years of Wulfric's enclosure. The chronicler accepts Wulfric as a living saint: he uses the words *sanctus* and *vir Dei* just as John does and doesn't balk at *miraculum*. The only substantial difference between Henry's version and John's is the part played by William FitzWalter. In its main lines the tale runs thus: sometime after his enclosure, Wulfric started to wear a hauberk, penitential in its discomfort and symbolic of his spiritual warfare. This garment proved inconveniently long for kneeling in. According to Henry, Wulfric proceeded to shorten it with a pair of shears, cutting through the chain mail as though it were linen cloth while William FitzWalter looked on, whereas John has the lord himself cutting the hauberk while Wulfric prays behind his closed shutter. John's version has more contextual detail, including dialogue, and is the richer for the collaboration of lord and holy man. Henry's is earlier by 50 years and simpler. Both writers give an account of an event without explanation in their day or ours, and both show some anxiety about its reception. Henry of Huntingdon invokes the example of St Gregory the Great repeating what he had heard about St Benedict 'from extremely reliable witnesses', adding that the story of Wulfric went one better, being 'attested by those who have seen parts of the hauberk, or visited his delightful presence, or heard his desirable speech, or have freely sought out the religious life and become religious themselves, and it also spread among all the people and is commonly known everywhere'.[19] William FitzWalter, as part of a peripatetic upper class, had a wealth of opportunity to spread it.

[19] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum, The History of the English People,* ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 697.

John, who may well have known one of Henry's successive updatings of the *Historia Anglorum*, has this to say: 'Some accounts of the cutting of the hauberk and other matters appear to vary, but the differences are merely circumstantial. I think, however, that after long scrutiny and from what I believe to be the more dependable testimony of proven honesty and age [*longeve etatis*], I have got hold of the truth.' We are back with age, and here the argument has a built-in weakness. John cites as his source Walter of Glastonbury, the lord's son, who had joined the Benedictines at Glastonbury well before the saint's death in 1155[20] and was still alive when John was writing [3, 38]. In other words there had been a space of 30 years or more for William FitzWalter to edge, or be edged, closer to the centre of the story, to be no longer a dazzled onlooker throwing himself at his protégé's feet but a valued collaborator in a miracle. The FitzWalter children grew up with this tale and no doubt heard it rehearsed for visitors on winter evenings. Perhaps it was they and not their father who over the years embellished their retellings to enhance family honour. And indeed the collaboration can be seen as reflecting an unfolding reality of interdependence between the lord and his holy man, borne out in the *Life*. The Haselbury version embodies a subtly different truth from the Huntingdon one.

Brother William the hospitaller: Friend and intermediary

A passing reference by Henry of Huntingdon to the popularity among *religiosi* of rings from the holy hauberk becomes a whole chapter in John's *Life* simply because he has more information. Br William, the lay guest master of Forde and Wulfric's closest friend, had often watched Wulfric winkle one or more rings off the chain mail and hand them to visitors.

> The unravelling took neither toil nor time, each link remaining entire and the parting being effected with a wonderful and divine facility. The matter was momentous, yet he gave the impression of someone at play, or even performing conjuring tricks, as, while doing divine violence to the shirt, he innocently pilfered its links in a kind of spiritual thieving. . . . Not that there was anything that envy or disbelief could possibly misrepresent, since the fact that it was done openly meant that the watchers had to believe their own eyes [*cum manifesta exhibitio ipsis oculis ingereret fidem*], while daily re-enactments renewed the truth and added to the power. And still to this day these rings can be found throughout the district in the keeping of the pious who treasure them as a gift – a testimony to holiness or a guarantee of health – either way a sacred and sure deposit [1, 10]. [21]

[20] I am following here Tom Licence in correcting the date given by John and by Bell (followed by me) as 1154. John gives the added information that Wulfric died in the first [regnal] year of Henry II [3, 44], which ran between 19 December 1154 and 18 December 1155. Cistercians calculated the year from Lady Day, Licence, *Hermits and Recluses*, 186, n. 48.

[21] The links of Wulfric's hauberk will have been either all riveted, or, more probably, given the date, half welded closed and half riveted. 'Un-riveting them, though it happened by accident when mail was damaged, is very difficult to do, even with the proper tools (pliers), and cannot be done by hand unless the links are actually broken. Likewise if the welded links are considered, these can only be

Hauberks were not uncommonly worn by twelfth-century recluses, but there is only one other known instance of the garment being miraculously shortened with shears, and this is surely a case of Wulfric's story being transferred to another and lesser known saint, probably in an oral form.[22] Henry of Huntingdon first heard the tale when all concerned were still alive and it was running like a March hare. John had the advantage of at least one eyewitness account of the repeated parting of the links[23] and may well have held examples in his hand. The kernel of fact is irretrievably buried: the story was seemingly life-changing for many.

Br William, as a young man, had left the court for the cloister, but either from humility or lack of Latin, had remained a lay brother. His birth and his office multiplied his opportunities for contact and conversation outside the cloister and across classes. He seems to have been the one friend to whom Wulfric opened his soul without reserve, 'matching the subject to the man' [1, 14]. These confidences included accounts of dreams, visitations and 'happenings', conveyed across time by Br William to John. William was also well acquainted with Brihtric, the priest of Haselbury, and Osbern, his son and successor, both of whom were in and out of the cell on a daily basis, and was thus in a position to pass on stories from a variety of sources. He revered the anchorite without being in awe of him and both enjoyed a joke. When Brihtric lost his temper over the restoration to a dumb man of two languages, while he himself had never mastered more than one, Br William was highly amused, 'and he in turn made the miracle, played down light-heartedly, merrier still at his retellings' [1, 14]. He must have been a capable man to hold his office, but he comes across as sharing something of the *simplicitas* of Wulfric.

Simplicitas returns us to questions of vocabulary. It is here in this frontier land where the apparently impossible is seemingly observed, documented and witnessed, that words have peculiar power. To loose against Br William the arrow 'credulous' is to destroy him as a witness. He lies slain by an adjective. John, walking elsewhere on similarly uncertain terrain, offers counsel: 'Now this is slippery ground where I personally watch my feet, and I would advise you to do the same, for fear of stumbling' [2, 25]. The Gospel, in which John's understanding of miracles is rooted, presents us as always with a paradox. We are told both that the refusal to believe in some way inhibits the miraculous, and that faith enables it:[24] power is given to the individual not only over the interpretation of the event but over whether it takes place at all. Insofar as this domain lies outside the usual purlieus of the historian, it seems prudent to approach it

released by opening the riveted links joining them, or using wire-cutters on them.' I am grateful to Thom Richardson, F. S. A., Keeper of Armour and Oriental Collections at the Royal Armouries, for this information.

[22] An almost certainly derivative version turns up in the *Life and Miracles* of one Godric of Throckenholt, a near contemporary of Wulfric who spent 40 years as a hermit in the fenland near Wisbech. This *Life*, too, dates from the last quarter of the twelfth century and reveals clear correspondences with both the Huntingdon version and an incident reported by John to have taken place a year or so before Wulfric's death, and therefore unknown to Henry of Huntingdon. The exact relationship between these three texts remains to be established. Licence, T. (ed.), 'The Life and Miracles of Godric of Throckenholt', *Analecta Bollandiana* 124 (2006), pp. 15–43.

[23] Br William on a later occasion begged a link for a monk of Waverley who watched wide-eyed while Wulfric twisted off the hauberk one for each [3, 14].

[24] See Mt. 13.58; 17.14-21; Mk 6.5-6; and Mt. 9.22; Mk 5.34; 10.52; Lk. 7.50; 8.42; 8.48.

using, not words that foreclose, but those that open vistas, even where overgrown. So let us say that wonderment is natural to Br William; through grace an innocent, he is always ready to be amazed.

Henry of Waverley: The prophetic gifts

Among John's witnesses a principal place must go to Henry, abbot of Waverley. John knew him for roughly as many years as Fr Henry had known Wulfric. An armed thug of the knightly class, hampered by a conscience, Henry had pulled off the road one day in Stephen's reign to visit the holy man of Haselbury, who proceeded to roll out his life for him, past, present and future. Henry's conversion, backslidings and eventual taking of the Cistercian habit at Waverley were related by himself to Baldwin, abbot of Forde, and John, his secretary-companion, on the slow journey to Cîteaux in the late 1170s. Henry was both an inveterate storyteller and Wulfric's greatest fan. His position as abbot, first of Tintern, then of Waverley, enabled him to crisscross Europe, carrying Wulfric's name around with him 'like a troubadour his lute'. Clairvaux saw him, Cîteaux, even Rome (all this in Wulfric's lifetime) where 'the lord pope and Fr Henry had their heads together in blessed Wulfric's name. . . . And Fr Henry, as he told us later, was privately glorying in the fact that he had all the attention of the man whom the whole world was waiting on, and was seen to enjoy not only open access to such greatness, but even a certain intimacy and fellowship' [2, 23].

Fr Henry's tale told on the long road to Cîteaux may well have been the spark that lit John's flame.[25] The impression left was so vital that John was happy to leave the stage to the abbot when it came to the re-telling:

> I am very familiar with his story as I had it straight from his own lips, as though I had been chosen by God as a witness fit to pass it on to you. But now I am going to tell the tale in his own person, to let it run more merrily and smoothly: so prepare yourselves to listen and believe.

There is no other example of John handing over the reins in this manner – out of five Fr Henry stories, only this, the first, is told *in propria persona*, and deservedly so because it is a conversion story, wholly autobiographical. John is right, too, it does run merrily, for the abbot of Waverley, described later as 'outstanding in humility and so long-suffering as to be almost insensible of injury', is also funny, chiefly at his own expense.

For Henry of Waverley, Wulfric was a seer and a prophet. The anchorite's prophetic gifts are the subject of forty-five of the hundred plus stories in the *Life*, and take various forms, all of which involve the collapsing or telescoping of time and space as normally understood. Phenomena of this order, many apparently genuine, others more certainly fraudulent, have been observed throughout history under various guises. Prophets, sibyls, seers, saints, fortune-tellers, psychics – the adepts of what is often termed the

[25] McGuire describes the road to and from Cîteaux as 'full of stories' and the General Chapter as 'a great yearly exchange centre', pp. 224–5.

paranormal – have been consulted in clefts, caves, cells and fairgrounds, and now on the internet. Wulfric's gifts in this medium were varied. He is reported to have foreseen with accuracy the death and imprisonment of kings, the failure of the second crusade and the shipwreck of Henry of Anjou's detested mercenaries, as well as a host of things more mundane but just as significant to those who enjoyed or suffered them. Distance was immaterial: he might be shut in his cell, he knew just what his boy was getting up to on the way to Montacute [3, 24]. He read the thoughts and hearts of his visitors in ways they found uncanny. Henry, sitting at Wulfric's window, heard a message of salvation that left him open-mouthed:

> I replied: "Sir, I am a sinful man, steeped indeed in sin, and living in sin to this day." "This I knew," he said, "but what you are to be I know as well." Then rolling out my past life and interpreting my future as though he were reading and relating to me an unbroken story: "That church," he said, "that you seized with violence, you must hand it back." He spoke too of the success of my journey, and, regarding events which were to take place before my return in the region I was going to, he foretold them with richly detailed accuracy and in the order in which they were later proved to have happened [2, 20].

It was experiences such as this – and there were more to come over the years which saw the robber-turned-monk return again and again to the cell at Haselbury – that caused Fr Henry to venerate his prophet.

Foresight, hindsight; reading forwards, reading backwards: it pays – and so people in turn have paid – to know the future, since to anticipate is, hopefully, to control. We look backwards, too, in search of understanding, seeking out meaning. Recluses and their visitors were all in the business of reading backwards: meaning lurked everywhere, one only needed a Daniel to read the writing on the wall. Wulfric was such a Daniel. He did it in his own life, interpreting his dreams, sleeping and maybe waking, the everyday and the extraordinary, of which there was no shortage in a world of seeming. Hindsight is not always comforting. The cellarer of Montacute was a grumpy man and it was a while since he had pondered Chapter 31 of the Rule. Wulfric's boy, sent to collect his master's pittance, got packed off once too often with a flea in his ear and an empty pouch. The holy man flared up: 'May God this day', he said, 'take that man's food away who has taken mine from me!' Within hours the cellarer had been swept away by a stream in spate. Wulfric blamed himself. Who wouldn't? John is hesitant, the only certainty was that the man was dead: 'It is the height of blind presumption and a temptation passing human strength to seek rashly to determine matters which lie for now beyond our mortal day.' He makes his way cautiously across the theological quicksands. As for Wulfric, his gift of foresight was not in evidence that day, it had been stymied by anger.

There is a chilling story of a man who came to Wulfric's cell in search of wisdom, trailing a reluctant companion. As the pious conversation dragged on, the companion's impatience with the whole set-up turned toxic, and shouting abuse at Wulfric he stormed off down the road. The first man eventually excused himself in order to rejoin his companion. 'He's not far off', said Wulfric, 'You'll catch him

up quickly.' The man returned in a state of shock after finding his companion lying murdered on the road. John represents him, no doubt accurately, as awestruck at 'the judgment of blasphemy and the prophetic word he had not noticed at the time' [3, 34]. Here hindsight is at work, providing instant interpretation of what was surely a coincidence, though John too saw it as a judgement. The interesting point is that Wulfric is entirely detached and passive throughout – this is not a cursing miracle. It is more a matter of simultaneity of event and perception, shown as operating outside the laws of space.

The practice of hindsight in varying ways and using a range of criteria is common to humankind. Prophetic foresight, however, seen by some as a rare gift, is more commonly held to be non-existent, and recluses have been represented – on occasion by their contemporaries – as gossipmongers, sitting like spiders at the centre of a vast web of information that enabled them to set up as fortune-tellers. John is aware of this and keen to defend his saint from any such suspicion [1, 8]. Today our understanding of time is less linear. It may be that with the advances in physics, which now envisages not three or four but a multiplicity of dimensions, the division of time into past, present and future will some day appear anachronistic, and the mystery of prophetic foresight may come to be seen as the irruption of quantum physics into daily life. Our perception of space is also under threat from the same source.[26]

The healing of Drogo de Munci: A many-authored tale

The story of one Drogo de Munci, a favourite of Henry I, is at the farthest remove from Fr Henry's first-person memoir: presented as a drama in two acts with many characters, it defies analysis in terms of how it was put together and by whom. The events took place no later than 1133, the year of Henry I's last journey into Wessex and, like the story of the cutting of the hauberk, confirm how far and fast Wulfric's fame spread along the roads of England. A group of admirers standing in the royal hall discussing the holy man's doings were interrupted by the cynical scoffing of the knight Drogo: the king should visit that charlatan's cell, he said, and confiscate his loot, people like that always had plenty stashed away. This outburst was followed by an apoplectic fit that left the man with a twisted mouth, the group of courtiers like a Greek chorus wailing 'Ah!' and 'Woe!' and the queen sought out as a go-between to take the unwelcome news to the king. The second act takes place at Haselbury. The king, with the disfigured Drogo de Munci in his train, visits the holy man's cell and, again pressed by the queen, sues humbly on his favourite's behalf. Wulfric, strangely passive, 'allows his hand to be placed on the sick man's face'. Is he as yet uncertain of his role, or does one sense a certain reluctance to intervene in favour of this arrogant

[26] See Robert Bartlett's comment on the ever popular conceit about angels dancing on the point of a pin: 'Now that scientists are willing to talk of particles or entities that seem to be in more than one place at once or move from one place to another without going through the space between or whose exact location can never be determined, the question of the nature of the angelic body is less quaint'. *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 75.

Norman who has been bad-mouthing him at court? Either way healing follows and the lesson humbly learnt is duly recited: 'Touch not God's anointed and do his prophets no harm',[27] whereupon the king and court, marvelling at this sign, go away 'strengthened by Wulfric's blessing and highly delighted with his presence' [2. 16].

This is sophisticated storytelling. How do we read the page that John presents to us? I would suggest as a skeleton of fact dressed by a succession of tailors and seamstresses with John adding the garnish and finishing. John says he received the tale from two named sources well known to him, who had heard it from Wulfric himself. But Wulfric, who thus turns out to be the only source, had seen nothing of the first act. The earlier events at court will have been told him by one or more members of the king's entourage deputed to prepare him and seek his cooperation. The village will have been buzzing with it for days and weeks afterwards, and Wulfric must surely have discussed the events with those close to him, William FitzWalter and Brihtric the priest for a start. So the version he passed on many years later to Br William and Muriel de Beauchamp was already a composite thing spun from the memories of a well-born and relatively educated elite familiar with the arts of professional storytellers. Br William and Muriel will have added their own emphases.

There is also the question of language. The English court spoke Norman French and probably used it when addressing Wulfric. Br William and Muriel de Beauchamp, both noble by birth, will also have spoken it, though perhaps not with Wulfric, for whom it was at best a second language. What they spoke with John is matter for conjecture. Up to that point the tale has belonged to the lively oral tradition where subtle changes accompany each telling. John gives it in Latin a literary and stable form – from now on it is fixed. Furthermore he embroiders it richly with Scripture, adding, or adding to, a layer of meaning that would be instantly picked up by every reader. It is now one of the most finished pieces in the *Life*, and itself full of life, which speaks for John's skill as a storyteller in the written medium, where it is only too easy to smother a tale by overdressing. Today it can be enjoyed as a story, pondered on for its meaning, picked at for historical gleanings; it is persuasive, like any good story, but no longer has that tang of authenticity that clings to some of the simpler anecdotes.

It is also a perfect example of the tale of the scoffer who gets his comeuppance, found equally in hagiographical texts and in the well-documented reports of canonization. The Middle Ages had its sceptics and its disbelievers like any other period. The refusal to believe was less in miracles *per se* than in particular works attributed to such and such a 'holy' man or woman. In the story or report, this refusal was swiftly followed by the vengeance of an Old Testament God, a.k.a. due justice. Penitence was as swiftly made, punishment remitted, and the saint's reputation enhanced. No doubt sequences of events that fitted this pattern were frequent enough. While high culture provided as models Elijah and Elisha, more popular echoes are not lacking – children in living memory used to hear: 'If you go on pulling those faces, your mouth will stay like that.' Wulfric has other scoffers to deal with [3, 13; 3, 30; 3, 37] and puts up with them mostly in silence, though one does end up dead [3, 34].

[27] Ps. 104.15.

Dialogue and truth

We have quite a lot of what purport to be Wulfric's *ipsissima verba* – the Latin expression is ironically appropriate since none of them were delivered in the languages we now read them in. Nothing that is spoken in the text is quite what it seems, so why do the anchorite's pithy comments, often caught in a net of dialogue, have this feel of authenticity? Given the long tradition, reaching back to the Desert Fathers, of seeking out the holy in the hope of receiving a saving 'word', the core meaning of those pronounced by Wulfric seems the most likely element of a story to have survived unaltered. Against this, it is also true that dialogue is a feature of miracle stories, and none of it was taken down verbatim by monks poised pen in hand. Yet it reposes on a truth: people talked; they talked in all walks and states of life, even in the silence of Cistercian monasteries, where miracle stories were an ever-acceptable currency.[28] They talk in Saints' Lives because they talked in life. The *topos* is a two-way thing. On the one hand a literary device, conveniently identifiable, it also reflects the commonality of an underlying reality. That medieval writers edited saints' lives according to certain norms is clear. It is easy to forget that hermits and recluses themselves consciously patterned their lives on their Desert forbears, and through and beyond these on the Gospel stories that were, after all, their *raison d'être.* Their lives conformed to a pattern long before hagiographers imposed one on them. Telescopes are double-ended and can be usefully employed in both directions.

Among the named witnesses who furnished John with testimony to what they had seen and heard, two in particular provided exchanges between Wulfric and themselves which ring remarkably true. In every case they have to do with the events, ordinary or extraordinary, of daily living.

Richard the scribe, who at one time copied books for both Wulfric and the abbey [1, 28], was the son of Segar, a married priest whose four sons ended up at Forde. Richard's own son also joined that community and eventually took his father's place as cantor. As a young man he suffered from insomnia and Richard went to Wulfric's cell to ask for his prayers: '"Let each monk recite the Lord's Prayer for him three times," said the saint, "and he will be cured." "But why, sir, are you unwilling to pray for him yourself?". . . "I could have obtained this from my Lord on my own; how much more all of you?"' [1, 29] A neat lesson in the responsibility of each for all and all for each that produced immediate beneficent effects.

After the death of his father, Richard went back to see the holy man and consult him about the state of Segar's soul. He received this reply:

> "He has undergone great suffering, but now he is resting from his labours. Indeed I saw the man in a vision stuck in the deepest mire, trying to get out, but quite unable, until I rode up to him on horseback, set him on my own beast and carried him joyfully away. So rest assured that this man is at peace." Richard was happy to hear this and went away giving thanks.

[28] McGuire, 'Friends and tales . . .' pp. 215–16, 224, 225.

Yet his anxiety niggled on and sent him back to the man of God a second time, to be met with the short answer: "Didn't I tell you that I set him on my horse?" [3, 19]. This story too has the ring of authenticity. Wulfric's vision comes straight from the borderland of dream, in particular the magical ease with which he transfers the man from deepest mire to horseback. Both Wulfric and John leave the meaning to be picked up: the allusion to the good Samaritan who not only set the wounded man *on his own beast*, but entrusted him confidently to the innkeeper, promising to pay – in this case in prayer and penance – whatever more was needed for his care.[29] Perhaps Wulfric's irritation was with Richard's obtuseness in not making the connections that underlay his own confidence. The dreamlike strangeness of the vision[30] finds extended meaning in the light of the parable.

Osbern, the son of Brihtric the parish priest, who as a boy served Wulfric's daily mass, succeeded his father as priest during the saint's lifetime and played a key role in the events surrounding and subsequent to his death and burial, only to disappear from the text after secreting the body. He is a strange figure. John never endorses him as a witness; he fails to say that he is still alive, yet doesn't use of him, as of his father, the phrase *de bona memoria,* which places on the dead a seal of approval. Osbern simply vanishes. Yet his input, sometimes given directly to John, at others via Br William or Walter of Glastonbury, was plainly great. John begins one chapter, '. . . let me set down two stories to which the one who saw and heard testifies in person', where this can only refer to Osbern [2, 4; 2, 5]. Twice he writes, 'This from Osbern', or 'This was related by Osbern' [3, 16; 3, 21], and once, 'This was related by the venerable woman Muriel and the priests Osbern and Segar' [3, 25]. I think, though, that Osbern was a still more important witness than John makes out. It was Osbern whom the holy man sent for, 5 days before his death, 'to come and speak with him one to one', and to whom he gave the instructions for his burial [3, 41]. The burden of what he heard was assumed by Osbern as a sacred trust, and to ensure that Wulfric continued to lie undisturbed in the place of his choosing became an obsession with him. It is likely that this soured his relations with Forde, and probably also with the FitzWalter family. The second reburial took place around 1170, after which all is silence.

In the stories of which Osbern is presented as the only source he is actor and eyewitness, which gives them particular significance.[31] Three go back to Osbern's boyhood, when he acted as acolyte for both his father and the anchorite, entering the latter's cell through the door opening into the body of the church. One morning when Wulfric was already vested and the lad went to light the altar candle, he was told to wait. He stood around fidgeting, impatient to be off at his games. When he complained that it was already late, he was told again to wait, for someone was hurrying to join them. At long last the priest said suddenly:

> "Now run quickly! Here is the one we have been waiting for, coming towards you now." Out went Osbern and just as he was leaving the churchyard he ran into a

[29] The innkeeper, often interpreted in medieval glosses as the Church, is here the Father, Wulfric, as priest, the *alter Christus*.

[30] Whether this was a vision or an experience on the frontiers of sleep is unclear. Two of the four mss have *per visionem*, the other two omit the words altogether.

[31] 2, 4; 2, 5; 2, 6; 3, 16; 3, 21; 3, 25; 3, 45.

> man wearing the religious habit. "Here you are," he said. "We've waited for you all this time, and a very weary wait you've put us through."[32]

The overfamiliar greeting of a twelve-year-old, a priest's son not afraid to be pert? It rings too true not to be a childhood memory, one of those that stay bright into old age.

On another occasion, due to be scolded by his father for having left the aspersorium at home, he attempted to mend the situation by borrowing the anchorite's:

> On slipping through the door to the cell he saw a light of dazzling brightness over the centre of the altar. Intent on this light, the saint was standing quite still in front of the altar step. The boy, filled with wonder, handed the aspersorium to someone else to give to the priest while he himself returned to his vision. Having silently closed the cell door till he could just peer in with one eye, he saw the light move slowly away towards the left hand corner of the altar and thence, passing over the chest that stood beside it, go out through the north window. Later the holy man, when Osbern asked him in private what the bright and beautiful light was that he had seen above the altar, said: "Did you see it then, my son?" "I saw it, sir." To which the saint replied: "Ah, if you were here around midnight, you might often see the like, and smell besides a fragrance so wonderfully sweet that all the world's delights would count for little in comparison" [2, 5].

These childhood memories stand out with a vividness that nothing else in the *Life* quite matches. The cell acquires a three-dimensional reality, confirmed today by bits of Norman stonework still marking the place of the door through which Osbern squinted, which now opens into the vestry. Some of these stories [2, 4; 2, 5; 2, 6] offer important glimpses into Wulfric's mystical life, for which we are otherwise largely dependent on John's speculation, fed by Br William.

Conclusion

We have touched on and sometimes examined more closely three types of miracle stories: miracles of healing, of prophecy, and manifestations of divine power. The first is comparatively few in number and most are, in one sense, straightforward. One may posit a psychological element, a change of environment, a self-limiting illness or none of the above; the essential thing is that all these people felt themselves healed – one might say they knew themselves healed – and in many cases it utterly changed their lives. The much larger group of stories involving what one might call the collapsing of time and space may one day have light shone on them from sources that currently elude us. Examples of this type of 'seeing' have been commonly reported among men and women living lives of rare spiritual intensity in cultures and disciplines that dispose to silence. Dreams, visions and revelations – the words seem to be almost interchangeable, if one excepts two chapters entitled *De excessu mentis in oratione* and *De visitatione*

[32] 'Ecce hactenus expectavimus te, et nimis molesta mora quam fecisti nobis tu'. 3.18.

quadam celesti,[33] which would be more properly classified as mystical beholdings – all are granted both to Wulfric and to those who need to be directed to him. Indeed, his own conversion was the result of such a meeting with a stranger – in hindsight an angel in human disguise – who foretold his future just as he, no angel, would later foretell Fr Henry's.[34] Dreams and visions are usually premonitory and contain clear messages [3, 47]. Again, these phenomena are associated with, though by no means exclusive to, cultures other than the present and if they do not fit easily within our parameters we should be wary of dismissing them as fond imaginings. Dreams in particular invite the reinterpretations of hindsight; the factoring in of providence will depend on belief and elements of circumstance. It is hardly necessary to remark that they have been mined almost as assiduously in the last hundred years by analysts as they were in the Middle Ages by commoners and kings.

The third type of story turns on changes in the nature or reaction of a material object or substance: water, bread, metal, oil, tallow. These stories are the hardest to account for or explain away. They contradict the observations of science, leaving no room for accommodation or compromise. Those regarding sources of light (candles, lamps) are stories of consolation: 'So it was that the Lord overheard the desire of his poor man before the man's servant heard his master's voice; and awake on the instant to his own servant's little trouble even before he cried out, the Lord was there with light [2, 2].' The reader is to understand that the material world is not always subject to its own laws in the presence of holiness. Wulfric is usually shown as passive: once he prays for light when his lamp goes out, but generally he is absorbed in singing his office. These are stories of God's power and favour; Osbern even ventures that one might be a divine joke [2, 4]. Examples of jokes on the part of dead saints are not uncommon;[35] those of *hilaritas Dei* are rarer.

Bread figures in several stories, multiplied for unexpected guests [2, 11], or rendered inedible when misappropriated on its way to Wulfric [2, 13; 2, 14]. Bread is at once the staff of life and, in a rural society, the stuff of gifts. Fragrant from the oven, the loaves are carried by servants who think that one, just one, will not be missed. They are mistaken: wrongdoing is always exposed, though not by the anchorite. His role is to draw a moral lesson and restore the spoiled bread or pasty [3, 26], to its true nature and purpose: it is handed back more delicious and, shared, becomes a sign of forgiveness and peace [2, 11; 2, 13; 2, 14].

The story of the hauberk is a story of power, a demonstration of the power of holiness over that strongest and most resistant of materials, worn to preserve a knight from death in battle. Wulfric wears it for its penitential discomfort and as a sign of his spiritual battle, but at the same time he, under God, is master of it, he makes it fit his life and not vice versa. The story occupies on several levels a place of great importance in the *Life*. Chronologically it is the first 'sign', its significance underlined by the unmistakable echo of John 2: 11.[36] The dramatic impact of what took place has the corroboration of a chronicle more or less contemporary with the event, while the

[33] Of an experience of ecstasy in prayer [1, 18] and Of a heavenly visitation [1, 20].
[34] 1, 1; 1, 11; 1, 26; 1, 27; 3, 17; 3, 29; 3, 45; 3, 46.
[35] Ward, *Miracles*, pp. 211–13.
[36] See above, p. 213.

links of the hauberk were still preserved and treasured 50 years later. John includes two further stories of the detaching of the links and ascribes to the hauberk a central role in preparing Wulfric for his coming death [3, 41].

It is far easier to work out the meaning of these stories than to dig up the well-buried nugget of fact, and attempts to deconstruct the story in pursuit of the fact, or with a view to disprove its existence, are usually counterproductive. All these stories are to be read like Scripture, where the metaphorical holds the significance, but the historical retains priority since without it the metaphorical would not exist – meaning needs an underlying reality. *Miracula* have been described as 'a particular discourse – a way of perceiving, ordering and describing experiences'.[37] At the origin of the story lies a happening, the precise nature of which will almost certainly elude today's reader, and for which at the time there was either no, or sometimes more than one,[38] conceivable explanation of a natural order. If the experience or phenomenon was reliably attested, lent itself to an acceptable interpretation and, importantly, proved transformational for individuals or even communities, it might well end up in the moving stream of miracle stories.

There used to be a nicely graded set of terms for the benefit of children, which went: telling stories, fibbing, downright lies. 'Fairy tales' was an optional extra. 'Facts' were taught at school. Saints' Lives are undoubtedly stories. Each anecdote started out as a telling, a telling that began, not 'Once upon a time', but, 'I saw', 'I heard', 'I felt', before moving tentatively towards 'I understood'. There are of course Saints' Lives that fall into the category of fibs, if not downright lies, the majority, however, occupy a place that is – perhaps essentially – indefinable, and miracle stories, which authenticate the holiness of their subjects, form an integral part of these lives, with the miraculous 'embedded in the whole narrative, shaping the story's structures, plot development, description and characterization, language and imagery'.[39] In other words the miraculous cannot be edited out, the work needs approaching as a whole. It may help to look both at the criteria used by a medieval writer in establishing the authority of his affirmations, and at the questions we ask of a text, the way we phrase them. We need to determine whether we want to know the 'how' or the 'why' of a happening that ends up as a story, and to make sure the questions we are asking are compatible with the source we are questioning. John of Forde was primarily interested in the 'why' of events; the 'how' bothered him relatively little.[40] This was just as well, since his authority was Scripture, and if he had put 'how' questions to the Bible he would have got misleading answers of the kind seen in medieval bestiaries. He didn't find this necessary, on the basis that if a happening lay clearly beyond nature – *praeter naturam* – the author of nature could

[37] Marcus Bull, *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1990). p. 13.

[38] Bull offers a perfect example of an event with more than one rationalist explanation, where the community preferred, for excellent reasons, to see a miracle. During an attack on the city of Mende the walls fell down on the attackers, saving the town and the inhabitants. These particular walls were of recent construction – a bad job, perhaps? Or the miners had miscalculated in their operations? The inhabitants instead gave the credit to Our Lady of Rocamadour, thus heightening their sense of community worth and creating an annual occasion for thankfulness and rejoicing, p. 34. Indeed, one could posit various reasons whereby a miracle cure might be preferable to one by antibiotics.

[39] Bull, p. 15.

[40] Another sign of the pre-Scholastic: interest in *quomodo* questioning was gaining ground rapidly in the Schools. See Benedicta Ward, *Miracles*, pp. 22–3.

bypass his own laws and the marvellous became, in this context, natural. For John, it was meaning that mattered, as it was for Wulfric and for all who received the news and passed it on: it was an unfolding process of marvelling, at the happening, at the saint, at God.

Readers today, who have spent their formative years being encouraged to put 'how' questions to parents, teachers and ultimately the universe, can find Saints' Lives problematic. The 'givens' of these texts being no longer received, they tend to fall like dominos, and the greater the number lined up, the more thoroughgoing the crash. Narrowing the focus to a single text, frequenting its characters and listening in on their conversations may help us towards that suspension of disbelief that is a preliminary to dialogue: it certainly limits the domino effect instigated by Collections.

15

The Eye of Reason – The Eye of Love: 'Divine Learning and Affective Prayer' in the Thought of William of Saint Thierry

E. Rozanne Elder

When an invitation arrived to contribute to this Festschrift honouring Benedicta Ward, my mind, for reasons obscure even to me, flashed back half a century to the late Martin Thornton's landmark *English Spirituality*[1] and its chapters on the influence of medieval monasticism on the English pastoral tradition. Perhaps a moment's reflection on Sister Benedicta's scholarly contributions to our understanding of desert monks and repentant harlots and of Anglo-Saxon and Anselmian monasticism and on her abiding fidelity to her own monastic vocation triggered some vague memory of Thornton's thesis: 'Devotion will go astray if it is not bridled by doctrine, and divine learning, if it is truly incarnational, must lead to affective prayer; reason and love are two parts of one thing.'[2]

When Fr Thornton's book appeared in 1963, I was just entering the fascinating world of medieval studies. As I read that assertion and his supporting claim of the formative influence of the Rule of Benedict on *The Book of Common Prayer* and its continuing effect on Anglican spirituality over the centuries, I warmed to a kindred, if far more experienced, spirit. Of all the many schools of spirituality which have flourished in the church universal over the centuries, he was convinced, it is 'Benedictinism which alone corresponds with English religion'.[3] He illustrated his point with two chapters on twelfth-century Cistercians and, after examining in turn the teaching of the best known of the White Monks, Bernard of Clairvaux, and of the then little known William of Saint Thierry, meanwhile relegating to two short paragraphs the Northumbrian Aelred of Rievaulx, concluded that Bernard had overemphasized affectivity while 'William of St Thierry is assuredly "our" Cistercian . . .'.[4] In this he gently slid over the fact that William was a Liègeois who had lived most of his life in Champagne, spent half his monastic life as a Benedictine, never, so far as anyone knows, set foot in England and, unlike Bernard, had no English ties. What drew Thornton to William was the monk's

[1] London: SPCK, 1963. Rpt Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2012.
[2] Thornton, *English Spirituality* (1963), p. 96.
[3] P. 83.
[4] P. 96.

avoidance of 'narrow spirituality' and a 'lazy quest' for a 'simple' faith',[5] in particular, his balance of rationally examined doctrine and affective prayer.

At that time William was best known, when he was known at all, as the author of Book One of the *First Life of Bernard*, and few of his works had been translated into English.[6] A handful of philosophers, theologians and historians could identify him as the critic who set Bernard of Clairvaux on his campaign against the 'heresies' of Peter Abelard, and most of them had tarred both Cistercians with the enlightenment epithet 'Obscurantists'.[7] While Bernard's works had continued to be printed, read, translated and studied over the centuries, William's had languished in obscurity and misattribution. His only widely circulated work,[8] *The Letter to the Brothers of Mont-Dieu* (*Golden Epistle*) was variously attributed to Bernard, Anselm of Canterbury, or Guigo the Carthusian. All this has now changed. Credit for his work was restored to William in 1924 by Dom André Wilmart[9] and the subsequent trickle of researchers delving into his thought and the events of his life has become a rising tide.[10] Translations into several modern languages of his surviving works have made him accessible to readers of all ages in all walks of life,[11] and critical editions of all his extant works have now been published.[12] At the end of his 50-page analysis of William's spirituality in his masterful history of western Christian mysticism, Bernard McGinn wrote of him:

> William displays a speculative power of mind unmatched by any mystic of his time, especially in his analysis of the relation of love and understanding in the

[5] Ibid.

[6] English translations intended for spiritual reading appeared, thanks to the indefatigable Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker and the London publishing house A. R. Mowbray, in the '50s: *The Nature and Dignity of Love* (1956) and *On Contemplating God* (1955). The same Fleur de Lys series included Aelred's *The Mirror of Charity* (1962) and *On Jesus at Twelve Years Old* (1956). William's work began to appear in 1934 with the publication by J. Vrin in Paris of M. M. Davy's edition and French translation of: *Meditativae orationes.* This was followed in 1940 by her *Un traité de la vie solitaire: epistola ad fratres de Monte-Dei*, and in 1953, by *Deux traités de l'amour de Dieu: De la contemplation de Dieu ; De la nature et de la dignitaté de l'amour*, and finally, in 1959 by *Deux traités sur la foi: Le miroir de la foi, L'énigme de la foi.* Jean-Marie Déchanet's *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, l'homme et son œuvre* appeared in 1934, and was translated into English by Cistercian Publications in 1972.

[7] See, for example, S. M. Deutsch, *Peter Abälard. Ein kritischer Theologe des zwölften Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1883).

[8] Volker Honemann, 'The Reception of William of Saint-Thierry's *Epistola ad Fratres de Monte* Dei during the Middle Ages', in E. R. Elder (ed.), *Cistercians in the Late Middle Ages* (Cistercian Publications, 1981), pp. 5–18; idem., *Die* 'Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei' *des Wilhelm von Saint-Thierry:lateinische Überlieferung und mittelalterliche Übersetzungen* (Munich: Artemisverlag, 1978).

[9] 'Le préface de la lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu', *Revue Bénédictine* 36 (1924), pp. 229–47.

[10] Among them: Stanley Ceglar, *William of Saint-Thierry: The Chronology of his Life, with a Study of his Treatise* On the Nature of Love, *his Authorship of the* Brevis Commentatio*, the* In Lacu, *and the* Reply to Cardinal Matthew. Ph.D. Dissertation (University Microfilms: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1972); David N. Bell, *The Image and Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality of William of Saint Thierry* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984); Jean-Marie Déchanet. *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, l'homme et son œuvre* (1934), translated into English by Cistercian Publications in 1972.

[11] English through Cistercian Publications, French through Sources chrétiennes, Spanish through Padres Cistercenses.

[12] Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis [henceforth CCCM], volumes 86–89C, edd. Paul Verdeyen with Stanislaus Ceglar (1989–2011) replace the editions of M.-M. Davy in the series Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques (Paris: Vrin, 1934, 1940, 1958, 1959); and Patrologia Latina volumes 15, 180, 184, and 185, according to the misidentification of the author.

> mystical path and in his understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit as our union with God. . . . William lacks Bernard's passion and the psychological delicacy with which the abbot of Clairvaux analyzes how the experience of carnal love is gradually transformed into that of spiritual love of God. On the other hand, William has something that Bernard lacks, or perhaps that Bernard only implies . . , a theoretical analysis of love's union as grounded in a theology of the Trinity.[13]

Details of William's life are shrouded in conjecture.[14] Born in the late eleventh century, he was educated at one of the cathedral schools then expanding in popularity and student population, perhaps Liège and almost certainly Reims, where he entered the Benedictine abbey of Saint Nicaise at an uncertain date. By 1121[15] he had been installed as abbot of Saint Thierry, a Benedictine house just outside the royal city. The distracting responsibilities of abbatial life in the 'feudal' world of the early twelfth century and time-consuming liturgical obligations soon disabused him of any contemplative aspirations he may, or may not, have had. When, at approximately the same time he became abbot, he encountered the charismatic young abbot of Clairvaux, he was awed by the spirit of early desert asceticism he perceived in Bernard. As their acquaintanceship deepened into friendship, he learnt from Bernard 'the realities that can be learned only by experiencing them', and realized that he had never attained, or apparently tried to attain,[16] the experiential wisdom which he thereafter regarded as the 'one thing necessary' to the monastic vocation.[17] This led him to begin to record his meditations and to long to share that experience. Having been well schooled in the liberal arts[18] and spent a number of years doing *lectio divina* as novice, monk and abbot, William had a polished Latin style and a thorough knowledge of patristic authors, above all Augustine of Hippo, whose omnipresent, if often incomplete, works graced the shelves of Latin monastic *armaria*.[19] The abyss between the Cluniac

[13] Chapter 6: 'William of St. Thierry: Spirit-Centered Mysticism', *The Growth of Mysticism*, The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1996), pp. 225–74, here p. 273.

[14] A *Vita Antiqua*, written some 50 years after his death by someone who had never known, or apparently read, him, is unreliable. 'Vie ancienne de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry', in A. Poncelet (ed.), *Mélanges Godefroid Kurth*, 1 (Liège: H. Champion, 1908), pp. 85–96; and ed. Paul Verdeyen, CCCM 89B (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 117–22; English translation with commentary by David N. Bell, 'The *Vita Antiqua* of William of Saint Thierry', *Cistercian Studies [Quarterly]* 11 (1976), pp. 246–55.

[15] His signature as abbot first survives on an 1121 charter, BN Picardie 249, f. 235; the next on an 1123 charter, #22 in *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims*, ed. Jeannine Cossé-Durlin (Paris: CNRS 1991), p. 199. Scholarly estimates on the date of his election range from 1119 to 1121.

[16] *Uita Prima Bernardi Claraeuallensis*, 1.59; In quo cum benigne et sine inuidia exponeret mihi et communicaret sententias intelligentiae et sensus experientiae suae et multa docere niteretur inexpertum quae nonnisi experiendo discuntur etsi intelligere non poteram adhuc quae apponebantur mihi plus tamen solito intelligere me faciebat quid ad ea intelligenda deesset mihi.

[17] *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum*, 4; CCCM 87:31: Sapientiae enim quae per cellam uinariam designatur, non nisi unum necessarium est. [Hereafter Exp Cant].

[18] The grudging 'septem liberalibus artibus esset sufficienter imbutus' of the *Vita Antiqua*, (Poncelet, p. 89) evinces the writer's lack of familiarity with William's works as well as details of his life.

[19] See David N. Bell, *Image and Likeness* (above note 10) and idem., 'Introduction' to *William of Saint Thierry: The Nature and Dignity of Love*, trans. Thomas X. Davis OCSO (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981), pp. 5–43, especially, 'Patristic Writers', pp. 21–3.

observances followed at his adopted monastery[20] and the simpler Cistercian life of prayer, reflection and work widened in his mind. In 1135, he resigned his abbacy and retired to the newly founded Cistercian abbey of Signy. There he died on 8 September, probably in 1148.

In what was almost certainly his earliest work,[21] *The Nature and Dignity of Love*, Abbot William recommended balancing scholarly rationality and monastic affectivity by developing a metaphor modelled on the physical sense of sight. 'The sight for seeing God, the natural light of the soul created by the Author of nature, is . . . charity', he began:

> Yet there are two eyes in this sight, always throbbing by a sort of natural determination to look toward the light that is God: love and reason. When one attempts to look without the other, it does not get far. When together they help one another, they can achieve much, that is, when they become the single eye of which the bridegroom in the *Canticle* says, *You have wounded my heart, my dear, with one of your eyes*.[22]

'Reason' plods along well-trodden pathways and 'has the greater sobriety',[23] whereas love, leaping ahead to rest in God despite all it does not and cannot know, enjoys 'the greater happiness'.[24]

This coupling of reason and love occurs within a straightforward four-stage pattern of spiritual growth proposed by Abbot William in parallel to physical development. As in all human pursuits, one must first choose one's intended goal. This act of will, as it intensifies, becomes love (*amor*),[25] a natural, if ambivalent, sense. As human

[20] Saint Nicaise followed the Customs of La Chaise Dieu, no copy of which is available to scholars. See F. Poirier-Coustansais: *Gallia monastica* 1: Les abbayes bénédictines du diocèse de Reims (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1974), p. 25; J. Cossé-Durlin, *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims* (Paris: CNRS, 1991), p. 39ff; R. Gaussin, *L'Abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu* (Paris: Ed. Cujas, 1962), pp. 310–11.

[21] André Wilmart, 'La série et la date des ouvrages de Guillaume de Saint Thierry', *Revue Mabillon* 14 (1924), pp. 154–67; Paul Verdeyen, following Jacques Hourlier, considers it his second work, but coeval (1121–24) with *De natura et dignitate amoris*. See in 'La chronologie des oeuvres de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry', *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 72 (2010), pp. 427–40, esp. 436; idem, CCCM 86: xxv-xxvi. John van Engen, 'Rupert of Deutz and William of St-Thierry', *Revue bénédictine* 73 (1983), pp. 327–36, p. 334, also regards *De contemplando Deo* as his first work, but suggests back-dating all his Benedictine works (p. 335).

[22] *De natura et dignitate amoris*, 21 [hereafter Nat am]; CCCM 88:193: Visus ergo ad uidendum Deum naturale lumen animae, ab auctore naturae creatus, charitas est. Sunt autem duo oculi in hoc uisu ad lumen quod Deus est uidendum naturali quadam intentione semper palpitantes, amor et ratio. Cum alter conatur sine altero non tantum proficit; cum inuicem se adiuuant, multum possunt, scilicet cum unus oculus efficiuntur, de quo dicit Sponsus in canticis: *Vulnerasti cor meum, o amica mea, in uno oculorum tuorum*. (Sg 4:9) Cf. Cant 138 (CF 6:129), Ep aur 2.3,196 (CF 12:78). Cf.1 Jn 4.16: Deus caritas est.

[23] Nat am 15: Habet etiam ratio suos quosdam tramites certos, et directas semitas quibus incedit: amor autem suo defectu plus proficit, sui ignorantia plus apprehendit. Ratio ergo per id quod non est, in id quod est videtur proficere: amor postponens quod non est, in eo quod est gaudet deficere.

[24] Nat am 21; CCCM 88:193: Ratio majorem habet sobrietatem, amor beatitudinem.

[25] Nat am 4; CCCM 180;4: PL 383A: . . . uehementer incipit uelle quod Deus uult, et quod uolendum memoria suggerit et ratio, et uehementer uolendo amor efficitur. Cf. Nat am 4 (180): Nichil enim est aliud amor quam uehemens in bono uoluntas. Per se enim uoluntas simplex est affectus, sic animae rationali inditus, ut sit capax tam boni quam mali. An Augustinian borrowing; see *De Trinitate* 10.11.17 (memoria, intelligentia, voluntas); and 15.22.42 (memoria, intellectus, amor).

love is touched by divine love, it becomes *caritas*, 'love enlightened; love from God, in God and for God who is Charity'.[26] Adhering indissolubly to God,[27] the seeker reaches the final stage, the enjoyment of wisdom, *sapientia*, in medieval etymology the savouring (*sapor*) of God.[28] All this is possible because human beings have been created in the image and likeness of the triune God, and, as Augustine had written some seven hundred years earlier, that image remains in the human soul as memory, reason and will[29]: a free but frail will,[30] a blurred memory, and a reason tied to the senses.

Other pairings which would characterize his thought for the rest of his life also appear in this treatise. *Sapientia* is distinguished from *scientia*, knowledge about creation and Creator learnt through the senses and weighed by reason, 'insofar as reason can without love'.[31] *Affectio*, inconstant fondness, was not to be confused with *affectus*, steadfast attachment, 'firm and stable and maintained by grace' and at its highest point identical with *caritas*.[32]

This early work makes clear William's debt to Augustine and the influence of conversations, or correspondence, with Bernard. Even so, it is a placid document lacking the intensity of his mature works. Except in its rich patristic echoes, it is not unlike some modern 'spiritual reading': solid, well-documented, but impersonal. On the subject of the spiritual life, William had acquired *scientia*, but not yet attained *sapientia*. Two subsequent works, *On Contemplating God* and *Meditativae Orationes*, written over a period of years, reveal the long, often painful, path by which learnt theory became personal experience. All this suggests that the treatise was composed between his first encounter with Bernard and the weeks he spent in the infirmary of Clairvaux, when Bernard 'tried to teach inexperienced me the many things which can be learned only by experience'.[33]

In the emphasis he laid on love and reason, William proved himself not only a reader of Scripture and Augustine, but a man of his time. In the early twelfth century, treatises on the substance and variety of love flowed from the scriptoria of Cistercians and Victorines, not to mention the courts of Aquitaine and Champagne. At the same time, the study of 'dialectic' was drawing young men to the schools of Paris and other cathedral cities. 'Logic', as R. W. Southern wrote, 'was an instrument of order in a chaotic world. . . . [It] opened a window on to an orderly and systematic view of the world and of man's mind',[34] and, in the opinion of spiritual writers, of

[26] Nat am 12; CCCM 186: Amor quippe illuminatus caritas est; amor a Deo, in Deo, ad Deum, caritas est.
[27] Nat am 23; CCCM 195; Cf. Ibid., 3; CCCM 179.
[28] Nat am 28; CCCM 199: Fruitio autem haec in sapore quodam diuino est, unde et a sapore sapientia.
[29] Nat am 3; CCCM 180: In qua trinitate sicut Pater genitor, Filius genitus, et ab utroque procedit Spiritus sanctus; sic ex memoria ratio gignitur, ex memoria et ratione uoluntas procedit.
[30] It was at William's urging that Bernard of Clairvaux wrote his first work, *On Grace and Free Will*. See the Prologue, *Sancti Bernardi Opera* 3: 165–166.
[31] Nat am 40; CCCM 88:408:. . . et in alta se extollere, quantum potest ratio sine amore.
[32] Nat am 14; CCCM 88: Aliud quippe est affectus, aliud affectio.
[33] Vita Prima 1.59: CCCM 89:75 (quoted above, n. 16).
[34] *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 179, 180.

man's soul.[35] Stephen Harding, one of the founders and second abbot of Cîteaux, sometime before 1098 had pointed out their irrationality to those of his brothers refusing to abandon traditional observances to follow the Rule to the letter at a projected reformed 'new monastery'. In William of Malmesbury's imaginative account of the debate which preceded the departure of the first Cistercians from Molesme, Stephen told them:

> Reason and the authority of the Holy Scriptures, although they may seem to differ, are one and the same. Yet since God has created, and recreated, nothing without reason, what could induce me to believe that the holy fathers, zealous students of God, would ordain anything contrary to reason, as if we were meant to put our faith only in authority?[36]

In his defence of the actions of several Benedictine abbots in the province of Reims in trimming back Cluniac customs, William complained to a much offended Matthew of Albano that until they had acted, the 'eyes of reason had been darkened by the veil of law', and pointed out that, in criticism of the actions of others, 'charity gives better advice if coupled with reason'.[37]

Once he had entered Signy and been relieved of abbatial distractions, William turned his attention to the meditative study of scripture.[38] 'The eyes of contemplation,' he rephrased, 'are two: reason and love.'[39] 'Reason clarifies, love quickens', and together they become one eye;[40] by it knowledge is acquired. But wisdom, as he was finding out, is God's gift. His decision to transfer to what he considered a more ancient and authentic monastic *conversatio* had not resulted in the contemplative experience for which he prayed. Accordingly, he refined his earlier metaphor by stressing the synergy, not only between reason and love, but between human endeavour and God's grace. The plea of the Bride to the Bridegroom in Sg 1:6: 'Do not gaze at me, for I am swarthy because the sun has discolored me' seemed to him to be saying: the unseeing soul is 'not so darkened as to be blind, as if I had not the eyes of reason, but the Sun of Justice has withdrawn from me the light of his grace, without which any eye opens

[35] E.g. William, *De natura corporis et animae,* ed. Paul Verdeyen, CCMS 88:103-146; ed. and trans. M. Lemoine, *Guilelmus de Sancto Theodorico: De natura corporis et animae* (Paris: Les Belle Lettres, 1988) [hereafter De natura animae].

[36] William of Malmesbury: *Gesta regum Anglorum [Deeds of the Kings of England]* Book IV, 334, edited and translated by R. A. B. Mynors; completed by R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1:578: Ratio enim et auctoritas diuinorum scriptorum, quanuis dissonare uideantur, unum idemque sunt; namque cum Deus nichil sine ratione creauerit et recreauerit, qui fieri potest ut credam sanctos patres, sequaces scilicet Dei, quicquam preter rationem edicere, quasi soli auctoritati fidem debeamus adhibere? (My translation)

[37] *Responsio abbatum auctore Willelmo abbate Sancti Theoderici*, ed. Stanislaus Ceglar in *William Abbot of St. Thierry. An International Colloquium* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications 1987), pp. 88 and 108; and in CCCM 89:103 (Nobis quoque rationis oculi uelamine legis obscruantur . . .). and pp. 112 (. . . et caritas cum ratione melius dederit consilium . . .).

[38] *Expositio super epistolam ad Romanos*, ed. Paul Verdeyen, CCMS 86 (1989) [hereafter Ex Rom].; and *Expositio super Cantica canticorum*, ed. P. Verdeyen, CCCM 87 (1997), pp. 19–133 [hereafter Exp Cant]. See below, n 43.

[39] Exp Rom, XVIII.88; CCCM 86:67: Duo sunt oculi contemplationis, ratio et amor.

[40] Ibid.,: . . . amor uiuificat rationem, et ratio clarificat amorem. . . . Fiuntque saepe duo isti oculi unus oculus. . . .

in vain'.[41] No reader of Augustine can overlook the necessity of grace, but William earlier had spoken only in passing of cooperating grace.[42] In his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*,[43] he unequivocally stated that the eye of faith alone cannot suffice until 'certain vision presents itself to the eyes of reason, not so much by nature as by grace'.[44] As if the passing years had made William ever more aware that his own determination, discipline and diligence would not bring him to the vision for which he yearned, in his Cistercian retreat he increasingly emphasized illuminating grace.[45]

At the verse in the Song, *Behold he stands behind our wall*, William described the wall which blocks our vision of the divine Bridegroom as constructed of 'a mind, a memory, and a conscience infected by concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes, and by the outward ambitions of life' – all effects of the first sin and consequent human perversion of love. By itself, fallen humankind 'cannot be "affected" by God'.[46] But into this wall the Creator has graciously set a window 'by which to contemplate God: the eye of reason, by which, illuminated by grace, to ponder (*speculatur*) things spiritual and divine, and this was set in man chiefly for this purpose, that by it, God might be seen by human beings'.[47] What is more, God Incarnate has shared 'our wall', so meditation on Jesus as revealed in Scripture prompts reason to move beyond what can be sensed or imagined to begin to perceive the eternal divine Word. By linking *ratio* with the verb *speculare*, William gently suggested that rational speculation is the natural, necessary, but not all-sufficient means by which 'the soul seeking God'[48] may surmount sensory limitations to peer beyond the barrier of mortality. Those who depend only on the eye of reason, however, no matter how keen their intelligence or how vast their knowledge, will never advance beyond the storeroom of Song 2.3. They will never enter the wine cellar to taste the wine of wisdom, never savour the Bridegroom[49] by being conformed to him in love. Peter Abelard was about to illustrate his point.

[41] Exp Cant, IX.47; CCCM 87: 43: *Nolite considerare me quoniam fusca sum, quia decoloravit me sol.* Non sic sum fusca, ut sim caeca, tamquam non habeam oculos rationis; sed sol iustitiae subtraxit mihi lumen gratiae suae, sine quo omnis oculus frustra patet . . .

[42] E.g. Nat am, 12; CCCM 88:187.

[43] On the basis of the manuscript tradition, Verdeyen ('La chronologie', 431–432) hypothesizes that William began this commentary at Saint-Thierry, but completed it at Signy.

[44] Exp Rom; CCCM 86: 61: Aliquando oculis rationis infundit se quaedam uisus non tam natura quam gratia, ut non tantum uidens rem sibi uisam, quam uisa res adtrahat sibi et conformet et coaptet uidentem.

[45] On William's theology of grace, see D. N. Bell, 'Love and Assimilation', Chapter Four of *Image and Likeness. The Augustinian Spirituality of William of Saint Thierry.* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984), pp. 125–65, esp. 131ff; and Aage Rydstrøm-Poulsen, 'La grace, l'amour et le Saint-Esprit selon Guillaume de Saint-Thierry', in *Signy l'Abbaye et Guillaume de Saint Thierry. Actes du Colloque international d'Etudes cisterciennes. 9, 10, 11 septembre 1998, Les Vieilles Forges (Ardennes)* (Signy: Association des Amis de l'Abbaye de Signy, 2000), pp. 519–25.

[46] Exp Cant 152; CCCM 107: Quod quid alius est [murus] quam mens et memoria et conscientia per concupiscentiam carnis et oculorum, et ambitionem uitae exterioribus infecta: quae quamdiu sic est, non potest esse Deo affecta?

[47] Exp Cant, XXXIII.155; CCCM 187: Sed et animae Deum quarenti fenestra est, qua Deum contempletur, oculus rationis, per quem, illuminante gratia, spiritualia siue diuina speculatur, ad hoc principaliter factus in homine, ut per eum Deus uideatur ab homine.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Exp Cant, XXIV.111 (CCCM 81) *Divitiae salutis sapientis et scientia* (Is 33.36) In scientia, hoc est in cellariis, pascitur ratio et intellectus; in sapientia, quae est cella uinaria, amor et affectur. Sciuntur illa; sapiunt ista.

William interrupted his commentary on the Song of Songs when he, 'by chance', came upon two books of Abelard's theology.[50] He soon notified the papal legate and Bernard of his misgivings: 'whenever I found something that agitated me a great deal, I noted it down', he wrote, 'and I have appended another note on why it agitated me, and all this, together with the books, I am sending to you'.[51] William then retreated to the prompter's box of history and Bernard took centre stage. Aware that his agitation was caused in part by similarities between certain objectionable Abelardian statements and things he himself had previously written, William reconsidered and clarified his previous opinions. To Bernard he scoffed at Abelard as *homo dialecticus*,[52] not because Abelard applied reason in his 'theology', but because he was using reason to study not the 'flowers' but the 'roots'; he was squandering reason on 'empty trifling, verbose, wrangling studies . . . to feed curiosity and ambition'[53] when by it man can instead glimpse mystery. Ill-founded speculation avails nothing; the first step must be 'faith founded on authority'[54]; both 'divine authority'[55] and that of 'the holy and wholly reliable fathers'[56]; in short, on Scripture, the Church Fathers, and 'even teachers of our own time' who work within that patristic tradition.[57] Abelard's perceived misuse of logic did not dim William's admiration for reason, but led him to new ways of expressing the need to balance reason with love.

Rather than continue the metaphor of the two eyes of the mind, he described three stages of deepening understanding of God by refining his analogy of human sensory perception. Physical senses can perceive material creation, but not the Creator. The first step therefore must be 'faith, founded on authority . . . formed by proven witnesses of proven authority'.[58] The application of reason to what is sensed enables man to 'discriminate, receive and gather information'[59] so reason becomes the second step, a reason now qualified as 'not human reason but that which is appropriate to [a] faith' freely willed, carefully articulated and consonant with authority.[60] The third

[50] One of the books was Abelard's *Theologia 'scholarium'*, and the other probably student notes. See Constant J. Mews, 'Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard', in Brian Patrick McGuire (ed.), *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 133–68; here 158.

[51] Letter 326.2, Jean Leclercq (ed.), 'Les lettres de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry à saint Bernard', *Revue Bénédictine* 79 (1969), pp. 375–91, text 377–378; edited from Charleville BM 67, fol 72v-73; Ed. Paul Verdeyen, CCCM 89A:13; PL 182:531: Casu nuper incidi in lectionem cuiusdam libelli hominis illius, suius titulus erat: Theologia Petri Abaelardi. . . . Vbi cum aliqua inuenirem, quae multum mouerunt me, notaui, et cur mouerent subnotaui, et cum ipsis libellis misi uobis . . .

[52] *Disputatio adversus Petrum Abaelardum*, 3; CCCM 89A 26, 126.

[53] *Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei*, 26; ed. P. Verdeyen, CCCM 88:228-289, here 273: Vana uero illa [ratio], nugigerula, uerbosa, contentiosa, curiosa, ambitiosa, etiam factum animum, uel jam perectum, dissipant uel corrumpunt.

[54] *Aenigma fidei* 41; CCCM 154: Item primus gradus in auctoritate fundatus, fidei est, habens forman fidei, probate auctoritati probabilibus testimoniiis formatam [hereafter Aenig fid].

[55] Aenig fid 25; CCCM 144.

[56] Aenig fid, 47; CCCM 158: ex auctoritate Christi Domini et apostolorum et apostolicorum doctorum.

[57] Exp Rom, Preface (CCCM 86: 3): aliquorum etiam magistrorum nostri temporis, de quibus certum habemus non praeterisse eos in aliquo terminos quos posuerunt patres nostri.

[58] Aenig fid 41; CCCM 154: Item primus gradus in auctoritate fundatus, fidei est, habens forman fidei, probate auctoritati probabilibus testimoniiis formatam.

[59] De natura animae, 62; CCCM 88:125: discernit et suscipit et collobat. . . .

[60] Ibid.: Secundus rationis est, non rationis humanae, sed eius quae propria fidei est, habens et ipse formam sanorum in fide uerborum diuinae auctoritati per omnis concordem.

step 'which advances the soul from faith to beholding'[61] can no longer be reason but must be love, 'the highest sense of the mind',[62] because the object perceived is Love. By definition, William thought, any sense is, by the experience of sensing, changed into what it senses.[63] Understanding means that the person sensing, not the thing sensed, is altered by being conformed to the object.

> The mind has as its sense understanding (*intellectum*); by which it senses whatever it does sense. When it senses rational things, reason goes out to them, and when it has relayed the message back, the mind is transformed into it and becomes understanding. In those things which go out to God, the mind's sense is love.[64]

Only when reason has become 'rightly oriented and perfected',[65] only when the 'eyes of the heart' have been enlightened by the illuminating grace of the Spirit who is divine Love,[66] only after 'experience begins to yield an understanding of what authority has taught',[67] did he consider someone capable of moving beyond its tutelege. The illiterate who could not read Scripture and were untrained in dialectics could confidently reply on faith. William did not disparage 'simple faith' any more than Bernard categorically disapproved of carved capitols and wall paintings. Literate monks, the one thought, should meditate on Scripture without the visual distractions of 'ridiculous monstrosities'[68] and Christians who by training are capable of rationally examining their faith, the other considered culpable if they did not choose, or chose not, to do so.[69]

The ageing William spoke no more of the eyes of reason and love in his final treatise on the spiritual life. Building instead on the text of 2 Corinthians 14-15: *Animal man does not perceive the things of God . . . spiritual [man] however judges all things*, he inserted between Saint Paul's terms a commonplace phrase he had earlier used in passing:[70] 'rational man'.[71] Using these three states of humanity, he mapped out another, more dynamic, ascent to 'unity of spirit' with God in his *Golden Epistle*, and introduced

[61] Aenig fid 45; CCCM 157:. . . de fide ad speciem
[62] Spec fid 97; CCCM 119: In eis uero quae sunt ad Deum, sensus mentis amor est.
[63] Spec fid, 97; CCCM 89A:118.
[64] Spec fid 97; CCCM 119: Sic mens pro sensu habet intellectum; eo sentit quicquid sentit. Cum sentit rationabilia, ratio in ea progreditur; qua renuntiante, mens in ea transformatur et fit intellectus.
[65] Spec fide 4; CCCM 82; Cum ergo sanos habuerit oculos, restat ut aspiciat. Aspectus autem animae ratio est. . . . aspectus rectus atque perfectus . . . .; Cf. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 2.6.13; PL 32:1248.
[66] Spec fid 27; CCCM 92. Cf. ibid., 103; CCCM 120.
[67] Spec fid 30; CCCM 93: . . . donec per operationem sancti Spiritus ipsa, sicut dicit Propheta, experientia intellectum incipiat dare auditui. . . . (Is 28.19).
[68] Spec fid 27; CCCM 92. Cf. ibid., 103; CCCM 120.
[69] Aenig fid, 44; CCCM 156: 44. Etenim sicut non posse scire de Domino Deo creatore nostro, qui supra hominem est, non reputatur in peccatum, sic ei qui cum possit scire aliqua, non studet, uel qui nondum potest, ut possit, dignam dare operam dissimulat, non solum apud Deum ignorantiae Dei reus iudicatur, sed etiam in poenam meritis suis debitam ordinatur, ut hic qui scire uel agere cum potuit, noluit, cum uoluerit, non possit.
[70] See below, n 82.
[71] Nat am 3 (CCCM 180); Meditations 4.11 (CCCM 89: *Meditationes deuotissimae (Meditatiuae orationes)*), ed. Verdeyen, 23: Non te paeniteat, O Creator, hominem [me] fecisse super terram, sed praecipe, sicut ab initio, ut sim homo rationalis . . . .; and De natura animae 63 (CCCM 125).

(or probably later inserted) it briefly into the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Song of Songs.*[72] By making 'rational man' the central pivotal state of spiritual development, he left no doubt of his unwavering conviction that reason is the ontologically essential sense[73] that enables man to interpret and move beyond sensory observation to gain knowledge, however incomplete, of a God who surpasses sensory and rational understanding.

As each human sense is honed in man's innate quest to know God and his own true nature,[74] disintegrated man must learn to rely on all his senses successively and simultaneously, not abandoning, but integrating each in turn. As understanding increases, prayer deepens. 'Animal man', dependent mostly on the senses, wheedles a God conceived in his own likeness for prosperity and success.[75] Rational man catches sight of a reality beyond sensory perception. In and beyond the incarnate Christ of Scripture, for example, he glimpses the eternal Word and, realizing that what he seeks surpasses the ken of rationality, asks to be granted 'the only thing which is superior to the mind: God alone'.[76] When 'the understanding of the thinker becomes the contemplation of the lover',[77] 'spiritual man' prays for nothing except to be conformed to the image of God, as humankind was created to be. *Nil petit ab ipso nisi ipsum et ad ipsum*, William wrote succinctly.[78] Knowledge and understanding, as in earlier patterns, becomes wisdom,[79] but only fleetingly. In this mortal life the mind fluctuates among these stages.

In the life to come, however, there shall be no faith, for we shall behold God. There shall be no sacraments, for we shall not need material signs of present reality. There shall be no Scriptures, for we shall not need to rely on rational understanding. We shall not see our teacher, the incarnate Jesus,[80] but shall gaze upon the Triune God who is charity. Participating through Christ in God, we shall be restored to the likeness of God to which we were created, becoming by grace what God is by nature.[81] Love, transformed and conformed to Charity, shall endure eternally; it shall 'not only exist, it

[72] Exp Cant III, Praefatio, 11–16; CCCM 87: 24-27. Cf. *Breuis Commentatio,* I; CCCM 87:155: Tres sunt status amoris Dei in anima christiana. Primus, sensualis uel animalis; secundus, rationalis; tertius, spiritualis uel intellectualis.

[73] In *De natura animae*, 67, he speaks of the certa rationis necessitate; CCCM 126.

[74] Aenig fid 48 (CCCM 158-159): Homini. . . naturalis inest appetitus cognitionis Deo et propriae originis.

[75] Spec fid 12; CCCM 24-25 . . .

[76] Ep aur, 206; CCCM 88: 271-272. Nullum uero dignius et utilius exercitium est homini eam habenti, quam in eo quod melius habet, et in quo caeteris animalibus et caeteris partibus suis praeeminet, quae est ipsa mens uel animus. Menti uero uel animo, cui caetera pars hominis regenda subdita est, nec dignius est aliquid ad quaerendum, nec dulcius ad inueniendum, nec utilius ad habendum, quam quod solum ipsam mentem supereminet, qui est solus Deus.

[77] Exp Cant III.20: Huiusmodi hominem Deum orare sicut Deum monet ratio . . . qui se conformans Deo, non Deum sibi, nil petit ab eo nisi ipsum et ad ipsum, nullo frui adquiescens nisi ipso uel in ipso, nullo saltem uti nisi ad ipsum.

[78] Exp Cant, Preface, 20 (CCCM 87:29).

[79] Ep Aur 2.263; CCCM 88:282. Spec fid 118; CCCM 126: Vbi sicut Christus non secundum hominem cognoscetur, . . .

[80] Spec fid 118; CCCM 126: Vbi sicut Christus non secundum hominem cognoscetur.

[81] Ep aur 2. 263; CCCM 282: . . . modo ineffabili et incogitabili, fieri meretur homo Dei, non Deus, sed tamen quod Deus est: homo ex gratia quod Deus est ex natura.

shall be perfect, because what we now love by hoping and believing we shall then love by seeing and possessing'.

> To see God there is to be like God; to be like him is to see and to recognize him. This perfect recognition will be eternal life, a joy which no one will take away from the one who has it. Here it can never be full because it can only be fulfilled in the full recognition of God, because however much we know about or recognize God here, we can never know or recognize him as we shall in that life where we shall see him face to face, as he is.[82]

William, like his educated contemporaries, had to reconcile two definitions of 'man': a creature made to the image and likeness of God according to Scripture; a mortal rational animal according to philosophy.[83] Restoration to the former by the rationality of the latter is the leitmotif of all William's works, no matter what metaphor he used. His reservations about 'new opinions on the faith and new dogmas'[84] might lead one to assume that he borrowed his terminology from the the texts to be found in patristic and early medieval books in the libraries of Saint Thierry[85] and Signy.[86] But was he perhaps as innovative as other medieval writers who deplored innovation even while innovating?

The two eyes of his early works[87] he could have found in either Augustine of Hippo or Gregory the Great, both of whom mention the eyes of love[88] and reason,[89] but do

[82] Spec fid 107–108; CCCM 122: Videre namque ibi seu cognoscere Deum, similem est esse Deo; et similem ei esse, uidere seu cognoscere eum est. Haec cognitio perfecta, uita erit aeterna, gaudium quod nemo tollet habenti. Nequaquam enim hic plenum esse potest, quod non nisi in plena Dei cognitione impleri potest; quia quae de Deo hic sciuntur uel cognoscuntur, nequaquam sciri possunt uel cognosci sicut in uita illa ubi uidebitur facie ad faciem, et sicuti est.

[83] Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 2, available in the Latin translations of Marius Victorinus and Boethius, and ubiquitous in patristic and medieval authors. See e.g. Augustine, *De quantitate animae*. 25.47: homo est animal mortale rationale . . . ita omne animal rationale mortale homo est; William, *On the Nature of the Body and the Soul,* 111-118; *Disputatio* against Peter Abelard, 3;Abelard, *Glossae super 'Peri hermeneias'*, 3.62; Bernard, Letter 412.1; *De consideratione*, 2.7; Sermon 5.7 *in dedicatione ecclesiae*; Aelred of Rievaulx, *Dialogus de anima* (CCCM 1, lines 474, 592, 809; Isaac of Stella, Sermon 19.12 (SCh 205:12).

[84] Letter 326.1 to Bernard on Abelard: nouae eius sententiae de fide, et noua dogmata . . .; CCCM 89A:13.

[85] Reims BM MS lat 427, ff. 12r-14r*.

[86] Anne Bondéelle-Souchier, *Bibliothèques cisterciennes dans la France Médiévale: Répertoire des Abbayes d'hommes* (Paris: CNRS, 1991), pp. 286–93. In neither source can one be positive that the titles listed were in the libraries at the very time William was using them.

[87] Reason: *De natura et dignitate amoris*, 21; *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum*, 9; and 33; *Expositio super epistulam ad Romanos*, 3; *Responsio abbatum ad Matthaeum Albanensem episcopum* (CCCM 88: 47-91). Love, *Meditations* 2.9, 9.1, and 10.8; *Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5; *Exposition on the Song of Songs*,11; *The Mirror of Faith*, 115 and 117; and in his Excerpts on the Song of Songs from the works of Ambrose 127; and Excerpts on the same from the works of Gregory the Great, 4 (both CCCM 87).

[88] *De Trinitate,* 1.13 and *Moralia,* 6.10.

[89] Augustine: *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 3.121; CSEL 85/1: 439.85,1 (M. Zelzer, 1974), a work not known to be in the libraries at either abbey, though it may have appeared in some *florilegium*. Gregory, *Moralia,* 20.14.

so only rarely and never in tandem. They preferred the scriptural 'eyes of the mind'[90] and 'eyes of the heart',[91] as did Ambrose of Milan[92] who never mentioned William's two eyes. And nor did Jerome, John Cassian, or Bede who all speak of the 'eyes of the heart'.[93] Anselm of Canterbury wrote a very great deal about both love and reason, yet although he spoke of the 'eye of my soul'[94] and prayed that God would 'cleanse, heal and illumine the eye of my mind, that it may see you',[95] he seems never to have mentioned the eyes of reason or love. Nor did Alcuin of York, Cassiodorus, Hrabanus Maurus, Isidore of Seville, or Remigius of Auxerre. A number of these same writers referred to man as rational, spiritual, animal (or carnal), but not in William's sequence.[96]

William's persistence in balancing reason and love also seems not at all typical of his fellow Cistercians. The youthful Bernard of Clairvaux had shown an outstanding aptitude in his studies according to William,[97] and warned his monks against the self-will 'which subverts the hearts of men and closes the eyes of reason',[98] but his affective vocabulary did not include the 'eye of love'. Similarly, he referred to both 'animal man'[99] and 'spiritual man'[100] and promised that once memory has been gladdened, will illuminated and strengthened, and the body mastered by reason, 'rational man will

[90] See Margaret Miles, 'Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's *De trinitate* and *Confessions', The Journal of Religion* 63(2) (April 1983), pp. 126–42, who cites R. Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969). Gregory, *Moralia in Iob*, 5.46 and *Homiliae in Hiezechihelem prophetam*., 1.2.

[91] E.g. *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus,* 18.10, 34.5; *Enarrationes is psalmos*, 12.4, 84.1,97.3; and in Sermons 4, 9, 53, 99, 127, 136B, 159, 286, and 306B.

[92] *Oculus mentis: Expositio psalmi cxviii*, 1.2, 9, 11, 12,18; 3.18, 3.3, 5.36; 11.10; 19.39; *Oculus cordis;* Ibid., 3.23, 3 and *De sacramentis* 3.4.12.

[93] Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 4.6.1, 6.13.1;,7.19.1; *Commentarii in Ezechielem* 14.47; *In Abdiam*, in *Commentarii in prophetas minores*; Cassian, *Conferences*, 1.13, 3.7, 14.9, 22.6, 23.8 (CSEL 13:19, 75, 409, 650, 652); *Institutes* 5.34, 8.6 (CSEL 17: 107, 155). Bede, in those books in the library of Saint Thierry: *In epistulas septem catholicas,* 4.4 (CCSL 21); De *tabernaculo*, Bks 1 and 2 (CCSL 119A); *Expositio actuum apostolorum* and also in *Retractatio in Actus apostolorum* (CCSL 121); *In prouerbia Salomonis libri iii* (CCSL 119B); *In Cantica canticorum libri vi*; 2 (CCSL 119B); *Homeliarum euangelii libri ii,* Homily 12.2 (CCSL 122), as well as in books not listed: *De Templo libri II*; *In Ezram et Neemiam libri III*, 3; and *In Lucae euangelium expositio,* Prologue, Books 1, 4, 6 (CCSL 120).

[94] *Proslogion* 16; *S. Anselmi Cantuarensis archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Th. Nelson, 1949), 1:112.

[95] *Proslogion*, 18: Munda, sana, acue, illumina oculum mentis meae, ut intueatur te; Schmitt 1:114.

[96] E.g. John Cassian, *Conferences* 4.19; CSEL 13:112: Secundum definitionem scripturae tres sunt animarum status, primus carnalis, secundus animals, tertius spiritalis. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 12.23; CSEL 28/1:416f.

[97] Uita Prima 1.1.3; CCCSM 89B:34. Nam in litterarum quidem studio supra aetatem et prae coaetaneis suis proficiebat. . . . On Bernard's thorough training in the *trivium* and knowledge of Boethius, see Ferruccio Gastaldelli, 'I primi vent'anni de San Bernardo' in Gastaldelli, *Studi su san Bernardo e Goffredo di Auxerre*, Parte I: San Bernard di Clairvaux 1. (Tavarnuzze [Florence]): SISMEL, 2000, especially 'La scuola del trivio e l'arte di scrivere', pp. 20–27', and pp. 28–33.

[98] Second Easter Sermon, 8 (SBOp 5:99) and the short text of De conversione ad clericos, II.3 (SBOp 4:734).

[99] 99. He cites Paul on animal man four times, in Letter 90.8; Letter 2.5; Sermon 1.3 on the Song of Songs, and Sentences 3.124 (SBOp 8: 32, 7:15, 1:4, 6/2:236), once to 'animal or carnal man' (*De diligendo Deo*, 24; SBOp 3:14), and warns of the dangers of mortality (Sermon 15.1 *super psalmum 'Qui habitat'* 4:476).

[100] *Sermo in uigilia sanctorum Petri et Pauli*, 1 (SBOp 5:185); Sermons 27.12 and 30.9 on the Song of Songs (1:190 and 215); and several citations of 1 Cor. 2:15.

begin to breath easily and pant to behold the face of the living God',[101] but his way of tracing spiritual progress moved from natural human affection to a love of God beyond measure, without accentuating the role of reason. Aelred of Rievaulx discussed reason with twelfth-century thoroughness in his *Dialogue on the Soul*, but referred just once to 'rational man'[102] and used 'animal man' only in citing Ephesians.[103] The eyes of reason or love he never mentioned.[104] Neither eye figures in the sermons of Guerric of Igny, who wrote of Saint Paul's 'animal man', but just once mentioned 'rational animal'[105] and never 'spiritual man'.[106] Gilbert of Hoyland came no closer than citing Paul[107] and defining the 'eye of love' as a single eye, a pure eye, an eye that looks only towards the One.[108] Isaac of Stella, scholar-become-monk, spoke three times of the 'eye of reason'[109] but said nothing of the 'eye of love'. He rarely mentioned 'animal man'[110] and never 'rational' or 'spiritual man'. John of Forde shared William's belief that the rational soul is drawn to its Creator by love and becomes one spirit with him,[111] but in all his 120 sermons on the Song of Songs repeats none of William's terminology. At the turn of the century the 'eye of heart' occurs in the *Exordium Magnum*,[112] and in the sermons of Hermann of Runa, but never the eyes of love or reason.[113]

What can we conclude from this quick tally of similarities and difference? In all likelihood, William spotted *oculus amoris* and *oculus rationis* in Augustine or Gregory, mulled over their meaning, and then decided to combine and expand on them in preaching to his monks, some of whom may have brought an excessive scholarly fascination with reason or an Ovidian enthrallment to love into the cloister, or renounced one of them at the gate. In later life, as he pondered Paul's contrast between animal and spiritual man in the light of Abelard's predicament, he may have hoped to make his unvarying call for a balance of rationality and affectivity more convincing to those of a scholarly bent by switching to more philosophical language. Whether he was moved to this by his own background, his concern over Abelard, or

[101] *Sentences*, 3.2 (6/2:63): Iam memoria exhilarata, voluntate illuminata et confortata, ratione dominante, corpore serviente, incipit homo rationalis respirare et aspirare ad principium suum: *sitivit,* inquiens, *anima mea ad deum fontem vivum, quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem dei mei?*

[102] *Dialogus de anima*, Bk 2, line 294 (CCCM 1). Cf. Sermon 28.17 (Clairvaux Collection); CCCM 2A:223 and Sermon 71.30 (Durham Collection); CCCM 2A:228.

[103] Sermon 48.8 (Durham Collection: CCCM 2B:19) Eia, fratres, animalis homo non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Sancti.

[104] 'Eye of the heart' occurs in his sermons: Durham sermon collection, Sermons 47.43; 50.9; 53.12; 55.23 (CCCM 2B:16, 29, 61, 87); Citeaux collection, Sermons 11.3; 24.13, 41; 27.19; 45.43; 46.3 (CCCM 2A:89, 193, 200,227, 365, 366; *De oneribus propheticis Isaiae* (CCCM 2D:19 and 154); *De Jesus puero duodenni* , line 22 (CCCM 1).

[105] Second Sermon for Epiphany; SChr 166: 258.

[106] Third sermon for the feast of the Annunciation; SCh 202:156: Nescit homo animalis qui non percipit quae sunt spiritus dei (1 Cor. 2.11).

[107] Sermones in Canticum Salomonis, 1.8; PL 184:17.

[108] Sermon 30.3; PL 184:156. Oculus tuus unus est, si purus est: unus est, ...Oculus tuus unus est, si intendis et intueris semper in unum, et in illum unum. Denique si amoris oculus est, unus est.

[109] Sermons 4.2; 9.4; and 28.16 (SCh 130:130, 208; SCh 207:162).

[110] Sermon 14.7; SCh 130:74.

[111] Sermon 14.7; cf. 29:260.

[112] Distinctio 5:10 and Distinctio 6.1.

[113] *Sermones festiuales* 51 and 59 (CCCM 64:107 and 234).

(we should not rule out) the imbalances he perceived among his brother monks, we shall never know.

That a modern pastoral theologian should have found William congenial is really not surprising. After centuries of being tossed between late-medieval nominalism and post-Enlightenment rationalism, authoritarianism and individualism, other modern Christians may also perhaps find refreshing his belief that each person bears responsibility for his own, and thereby all humanity's, renewal by reintegrating what sin disintegrated. They may find convincing his conviction that, despite the fall, human beings have, by nature and by grace, the gifts to discharge this responsibility through disciplined living, sustained study, and a loving openness to the Spirit, all within a framework of prayer.

16

Concerning Academic Translation and the Latin of Conrad of Eberbach

Paul Savage

The fruits of translation are many, and scholars of the Middle Ages frequently use – perhaps more than they readily admit – translations of primary sources.[1] While none would depend solely on translated source material, it is often through a translation that one receives a first glimpse into a source. A good academic translation, therefore, performs a fundamentally important function: it provides that first interpretative understanding of a text which enables one to integrate the book, or an author, into a larger discourse without expending the greater amount of time and effort needed to approach the Latin original. However, the process of translation is time consuming, sometimes mundane, and often perceived as less rewarding than original scholarship. The book presently under discussion is Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium magnum cisterciense* (EM), which I recently co-translated with Sr Benedicta Ward.[2] Here we will consider the purposes and process of academic translation by examining Conrad's text and the ways in which a translator may approach a text of large scale and complexity. More consideration should be given to academic translation as a discipline, and I hope to offer here some preliminary observations of how one should go about it. Part of this will be an examination of how best to collaborate on such a project, since this is a useful way to divide the labour, increase quality and allow scholars (ever concerned about tenure, etc.) to pursue translation, which is a relatively unrewarded activity.

First a brief description of the text: The *Exordium magnum* is a Latin collection of stories, history and lore that exceeds 300 pages. It was compiled and written by Conrad of Eberbach between 1180 and 1215, and is divided into six books – referred to as *distinctiones* – the first of which traces monastic history back to John the Baptist, through the Desert Fathers and Black Monks, to Cîteaux. It is an important source for Cistercian history and for religious life during the High Middle Ages. Stories from the book were incorporated in the development of *pastoralia* literature, for sermon

[1] An earlier version of this article was presented at the 48th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI. I am grateful to Brian Patrick McGuire, Terrence Kardong, Hugh Feiss and Marsha Dutton for comments and suggestions.

[2] 'Recently' is a relative word, as Sr Benedicta began the project in the 1970s, while she and I joined forces some 20 years ago, in 1992.

collections, and are referenced in some texts of the *Devotio moderna* movement. Nonetheless the EM is seldom studied, in part, because Conrad wrote in an annoyingly circuitous Latin style that has kept his book away from all but the most persistent readers. It is therefore a book well worth translating and one that should receive more academic attention as a result. That being said, one should consider what manner of translation is most appropriate for use in the academy.

The form and function of academic translation

There are several things to consider when thinking about what form an academic translation should take, but the primary concern should be to make the volume function as an effective portal through which scholars may enter the text quickly and thoroughly. This is especially the case with larger books like the *Exordium magnum*.[3] The first task is, of course, to transform the Latin into an English that accurately reflects the original, but does so in a readable manner. However, in addition to that, a truly useful academic translation should include support materials needed to place the Latin text into context. In the case of the EM we have a book that includes a wide variety of texts (biblical accounts, papal letters, Cistercian documents, miracle stories), and therefore requires various support materials to facilitate a meaningful understanding of the work (e.g. introduction, textual notes, discussions of secondary scholarship, indices, etc.). This means that the translator should utilize where appropriate all available scholarship on the text. In the case of the EM there were two printings of the Latin edition as well as translations into French, Spanish and German.[4] Each of these volumes contains material of interest to the scholar – information about the manuscript tradition, biblical and other references, brief indices, etc. – but most of it is confined to only one of the books, and none contains a thorough index. Therefore, Sr Benedicta and I decided early on that our volume would involve the collation and verification of earlier references, adding our own as we went.[5] In addition, we would reference the limited number of scholarly articles that existed.

While support materials are fundamentally important, the central concern of a translation project is language; this being said there are very few examinations of

[3] The EM also suffers from being rarely available because previous editions and translations are expensive, and seldom found in any but specialized university libraries.

[4] Bruno Grießer (ed.), *Exordium magnum Cisterciense sive Narratio de Initio Cisterciensis Ordinis* (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1961); reprinted with new pagination and minor changes as CCCM 138, Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1994 [1997]. Translations are: *Conrad d'Eberbach, Le Grand Exorde de Cîteaux ou Récit des débuts de l'Ordre cistercien*, trans. by Anthelmette Piébourg, Brepols/Cîteaux Commentarii cistercienses, 1998; *Gran Exordio de Císter: narración de los orígenes de la Orden Cisterciense*, Revista Cistercium R. E. Abadía Cisterciense de Viaceli, 1998; *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense oder Bericht von Anfang des Zisterzienserordens*, trans. by Heinz Piesik, et al., 2 vols, Quellen und Studien zur Zisterzienserliteratur (Langwaden: Bernardus-Verlag, 2000, 2002); and *The Great Beginning of Cîteaux*, trans. by Benedicta Ward and Paul Savage (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications/Liturgical Press, 2012). Note: we were not able to consult the Spanish translation during our translation.

[5] A limiting factor here is the expense involved in publication, so compromises must be made. The translator should therefore prioritize support materials: I decided, for example, that maps and supplementary essays were not as important as including a wide range of scholarship and thorough indices. Maps etc. were not included in the final publication.

academic translation as a discipline. A search in ITER for the term 'literary translation' yields 13 hits, and 1,693 in JSTOR. When one does the same for 'academic translation', one finds 0 matches in ITER and just 40 in JSTOR (11 of which are book reviews). The field of Translation Studies is of little help since it is more concerned with matters of critical inquiry across cultures – generally with issues of power and perception – than with the methodologies and mechanics of translation itself. Additionally, scholars in Translation Studies do not often concern themselves with the translation of 'dead' languages like twelfth-century monastic Latin.[6]

Practitioners of literary translation have engaged in more self-reflection about the nature of their practice, but literary translators rarely consider their academic counterparts, and can even be dismissive of academic translation in general. For example the following passage from an article about William Arrowsmith (the well-regarded translator of Greek drama) contrasts this literary translator with his more prosaic academic counterparts: 'We recognize academic translation, on the contrary [i.e., as opposed to literary], by its neutrality, its "purity," and by its failure of nerve in the presence of actual complex human authorship.'[7] While one may take gentle umbrage at the comment 'failure of nerve' on the part of academic translators, the recognition that academic translation should strive to be neutral and somehow pure is easy to embrace.

An academic translation should maintain the meaning and idiom of the original text with precision and consistency. Literary translation may vary substantially from the original if the translator determines that such variance is necessary to convey the sense of the work to a contemporary audience. Literary translation is allowed, indeed expected, to take such license: to use a cliché, literary translators attempt 'to make the text speak' to a different generation in a modern language and idiom.[8] This necessitates that a certain freedom be allowed literary translators, and often the vocabulary and syntax of the original must be abandoned in order to convey to moderns the feeling and emotion of a text from a much different culture and time period. Literary translation is understood to be sometimes as much the voice of the translator as of the original author. In some cases, the stronger the translator's voice, the more engaging the translation: one thinks of Fagel's Sophocles, T. E. Lawrence's Homer, or Pound's Chinese 'readings', as he called them.[9]

Academic translation, on the other hand, should not be allowed such wide variance from the original. The cliché here is that an academic translation must endeavour 'to

[6] The *Rutledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2/e, ed. by Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (Abington: Routledge, 2008) provides an excellent overview of the field.

[7] W. S. DiPiero, 'Different Tones', *Arion*, 3rd Series, Vol. 2. 2/3 (Sp. 92-Fall, 1993), p. 261.

[8] André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 8–10 portrays literary translation as an often unconscious 'rewriting' of texts to suit the tastes of a dominant culture. Regardless of whether one agrees with Lefevre's belief that this manipulation is largely about cultural power, one can grant that he is correct to point out the sometimes wide gulf between an original and its translated versions. My contention is that academic translation can avoid much of this gulf if it minimizes the urge to align the text with too contemporary an idiom. See also Lefevere's chapter on Catullus (pp. 99–110) for an interesting analysis of how that poet's work has been rewritten over the years.

[9] Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus*, trans. by Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin, 1984 [1982]). *The Odyssey of Homer,* trans. by T. E. Shaw (Lawrence of Arabia) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940). Regarding Pound, the original book is *Cathay*, published in 1915; easiest access is in Ezra Pound, *New and Selected Poems and Translations*, 2/e, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: New Directions Press, 2010).

stay as close to the original text as possible'. To contrast the two: the literary translator is primarily concerned with rendering a text into contemporary idiom, focusing on that idiom and placing the original into it, while academic translators take an opposite approach – they are primarily focused on the original's idiom and vocabulary, and must then determine ways to render that into serviceable English. It is a question of emphasis: the former seeks to make the original modern, the latter attempts to grant entry to a past sensibility using a different, more contemporary language.

This raises the question of whether academic translation should become in effect literal translation. My answer is that it should not: academic translation should incorporate as much of the original text's vocabulary as practically possible, but at the same time avoid a mere word-for-word rendering. In the case of the EM, a true word-for-word translation would be excruciating, and frankly incomprehensible. Yet Conrad's wordiness is very much part of who he was and often conveys his piety, sense of urgency, and perhaps even his priggishness.[10] What often strikes the modern reader as wasted words can betray insights into Conrad's sensibilities, and therefore the academic translator should include as many of those words as reasonably possible in an English version.[11] They may be utterly contrary to contemporary English usage, but those redundant adjectives, odd gerundives and endless clauses meant something to Conrad and his audience. They may say something as well to a discerning scholar and are thus integral to a good academic translation. Many of us have had the experience of reading a translation and thinking 'my goodness, that is really interesting', only to go to the Latin, read it, and think, 'goodness, that isn't quite what it really says'. Often this is because a translator has deviated from the text in an effort to make it more elegant, or to put it in a more contemporary idiom. An academic translator seeks to avoid this experience among readers by retaining as much as possible the original text's idiom and vocabulary.

The challenge, of course, is to avoid an unreadable English version, and to translate closely a text like the EM presents certain issues, some of which are perennial problems in Latin translation. Latin does not depend on word order, particles, prepositions, and sometimes not even on a consistent sequencing of clauses to convey the author's intent or emphasis.[12] And Conrad of Eberbach frequently seems little concerned with such niceties of grammatical convention. There are essentially two issues here: first, the sheer number of words – Conrad rarely used five words when eleven would do. But who is to decide which to abandon or conflate? The second issue is his frequent use of extended and sometimes obtuse grammatical constructions. A multiplicity of words leads to a multiplicity of clauses, which lead to questions like 'what does that relative pronoun refer to?' 'Is it even on this page?' 'Does he think *porta* (entrance) is neuter?' 'Do you see anything that's neuter . . .?'

[10] Benedicta Ward once characterized Conrad as 'a bit of a prig, isn't he' in conversation with me, July 2004.

[11] Here I am not referring to grammatical throw-away words like an extra *quod* in indirect discourse, rather I argue for the inclusion of Conrad's multiple adjectives and the need to convey somehow his often elaborate sentence structure, which by today's standards is grandiose and inelegant.

[12] On the issue of how to manage sequential focus in translation, see Sándor G. J. Hervey, 'Speech Acts and Illocutionary Function in Translation Methodology', in Leo Hickey (ed.), *The Pragmatics of Translation* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, Ltd, 1998), pp. 10–24.

In the midst of such questions, one is well served by consciously translating in multiple stages. First one reads through the passages making a rough translation, not so much precisely of what was written, but of the sense being conveyed. This is then followed by continued closer readings in which more and more words are incorporated, words that at first sight muddled the flow. While these are the words that were ignored earlier in an attempt to comprehend what was being said, they can also be inseparable from a more complete understanding of a text. Below is a passage (which Conrad borrowed from one of his main sources, Herbert of Clairvaux) about a brother who is dying. The first English version ignores several of the Latin words but makes the meaning clear.

EM 4.23 (Grießer, 250; Ward and Savage, 363):

> Numquid non aspicitis angelos Dei, qui modo advenerunt? Pulsate ergo quantocius tabulam, quoniam ipsi praestolantur exitum meum. Vix verba finierat, et mox pretiosam resolutus in mortem felicem animam reddidit. Nec dubium, quin spiritus beati, quos praevidere meruerat, eam susceperint et secum ad gaudia sempiternae beatitudinis perduxerint.
>
> "Do you not see that the angels of the Lord have come? Sound the board for they are here for my passing." Scarcely had he said this when he breathed his last. There is no doubt that the blessed spirits who had shown themselves to him took his soul straight into eternal bliss.

As a piece of writing, there is no substantive problem with the meaning of the above translation; it conveys perfectly the sense of the Latin, but there is much Latin that is not represented in the English version. The rendering below (the published version, after Benedicta and I had been through it four times) accounts for virtually all of the Latin, preserves more of Conrad's tone, and does not overly sacrifice English usage:

> "Do you not see that the angels of God have already come? Sound the board *right away, for they are waiting here for my departure*." Scarcely had *he finished saying this* when he *gave up his happy soul in a precious death*. There is no doubt that the blessed spirits whom he had been *privileged to see in advance* took his soul straight into the joys of *eternal blessedness*.

I have italicized the additions made in this version. These words convey more of the drama of the moment, which the author seems to have intended. This is a moving story about a good monk's death and the Communion of Saints, subjects about which Conrad cared deeply. This version incorporates far more of his own vocabulary: it is therefore more true to his voice and conveys more completely his intentions. Scholarly readers are better served by seeing more of Conrad's text in English.

There is also an issue when a translator must change radically the word order or the sequencing of clauses and sentences. Conrad's Latin is notably long-winded and the modern translator is often well advised to break up such elliptical constructions, and sometimes to rearrange clauses for better flow and clarity. This must be done carefully, however, in order to preserve the author's intent. The rearrangement of clauses opens the possibility of shifting the emphasis of a text because the oddly placed clause can be a signal that the author wants to emphasize that thought (or it may simply be the

result of a sometimes colloquial writing style). Recasting sentences on a significant scale must be done with consideration of how such a change might alter the reader's understanding of the resulting sentences. The translator's goal is that the author's voice should come through and that the reader, not the translator, do the interpretation.

In the passage below, Conrad introduces a story about the sacrament of confession. As in the example above, the Latin is followed by an early draft, with the published version below that. The last sentences are especially vexing.

EM 5.13 (Grießer, 311; Ward and Savage, 457):

> Unde, quaeso, patienter feras, lector, si adhuc de sacramento confessionis pernecessarium, ut reor, exemplum breviter perstrinxero. In quo [the reading he is introducing] evidentissime clarebit, quam lamentabili ruinae caecitas humanae mentis, quae per liberum arbitrium corrupta est, obnoxia sit et rursum, quam potens, quam efficax sit gratia ad salvandum, quod perierat, quae utique ab ipsa etiam ruina servare poterat, si non secundum egregiam Ambrosii sententiam necessarium fuisset Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est, ut proinde nobilis ad imaginem Dei creata natura, quid per se vel quid per gratiam sit, agnoscens miserationum Domini in aeternum non obliviscatur.
>
> Therefore, reader I ask your patience while I record a new example which is very instructive about confession. It shows clearly the deplorable ruin which awaits our blindness of spirit if it is corrupted by self will and how powerful and efficacious grace is to save those who are perishing. This grace is well able to keep us from perdition if it reminds men of His miseries, as Ambrose says so well, the sin of Adam which Jesus Christ came to destroy, so that the human creature, that notable image of God, may know it as it is in itself, and know also that with the loving kindness of the Lord what it could become.
>
> Therefore, reader, I ask your patience while I record a *brief example about the necessity of sacramental confession*. It shows very clearly, I think, the deplorable ruin that awaits our blindness of spirit, which has been corrupted by *free will*, and *conversely*, how powerful and effective grace is to save those who are perishing. This grace is quite able to keep us from ruin if we never forget the mercy of the Lord. *As Ambrose says so well, the sin of Adam, which Christ destroyed by his death, had been necessary so that the noble nature created in the image of God may know what it is in itself and what it is through grace*.

The first lines of this passage are fairly straightforward and show again how the inclusion of Conrad's actual vocabulary increases meaning: the addition of 'sacramental' for *de sacramento confessionis* speaks to Conrad's deep regard for confession as an essential practice in the church (for monks and lay people alike). But the last six lines are an example in which the sentence structure was significantly altered in order to arrive at a reasonably elegant English version. Primarily, the challenge involves what to do with 'agnoscens miserationum Domini in aeternum non obliviscatur', relative to the rest of the passage. It is plausible that Conrad meant to make a point by placing 'the mercy of the Lord' at the end of his passage. As such, we decided to reflect that emphasis by having the clause stand alone as its own sentence (one way English can replicate such emphasis), though we changed where that sentence is placed for reasons of style and

coherence. We then decided to conclude with Ambrose's pithy observation, which is in itself another challenging piece of Latin to render into English. Of course, at a more practical level we wanted to turn some rather meandering Latin into idiomatic English. It involved some interpretation on our part, but I hope it was minimal.

A similar dilemma presented itself in EM 6.4, a passage that gave difficulty throughout. Here Conrad reflects on the spiritual meaning of a monk dying at Clairvaux, where he can live among great exemplars, whose prayers can then help him into the next life. One can also note that this passage is only two sentences in the published Latin edition, thus illustrating another of the challenges of dealing with the EM. The passage's meaning was reasonably clear from the beginning, the dilemma was how to put it into English in a way that is coherent but in keeping with Conrad's style. The Latin and a composite of early attempts are below.

EM 6.4 (Grießer, 352–3):

> Ceterum quis ambigat hoc per divinae bonitatis abundantiam nonnullis quandoque concedi, ut, quod sibi in se deest meritorum, alienis meritis debere suppleri et, quia infirmus et imperfectus quisque ecclesiae in religione perfecte incorporatur, perfectorum meritis imperfectorum tegi deformitatem, dummodo iidem imperfecti pura intentione perfectionis et sacrae religionis pro modulo suo imitatores effecti de hoc mundo rapiantur, sicut psalmista canit, quia: Cum sancto sanctus eris et cum viro innocente innocens eris? Nec solum religiosa quaelibet ecclesia credenda est in membris suis adhuc in carne peccati strenue militantibus infirmos meritis et precibus fovere atque protegere exitumque munire, verum etiam multo magis in membris suis post sacrae peractaeque militiae sudores emeritorum requie et beatitudine gloriosis id speranda est actitare, quemadmodum quidam perfectae religionis senior de fratribus Claraevallis, qui gratiam videndi quandoque res invisibiles a Domino acceperat, testatus est dicens morientibus fratribus animas iam carne solutas ad animam carne solvendam non minori, vel potius maiori frequentia et devotione, quam carnem adhuc vegetantes occurrere atque, ut malignorum spirituum cum multa truculentia ex adverso occurrentium malitiosas accusationes evadere verique luminis et aeternae beatitudinis participium consequi posit, officiossima caritate insistere.
>
> Moreover, the infinite goodness of our God sometimes allows certain men of grace the finding in the merits of others what they themselves lack. If one of these, although feeble and imperfect, has the privilege of being associated with first-rate religious, who can doubt that all his imperfections will be covered by their sanctity? Provided that these weak souls I am talking about show here below a sincere love of goodness and virtue, and try, as much as they can, to imitate the lives of the able models they have before their eyes. As the psalmist says, "with the holy you shall be holy and innocent with the innocent man." It is not only through the good works and prayers of the members who fight valiantly on earth in sinful flesh that a religious community helps, protects and strengthens those in need of help at the hour of their death; it is even more by the merits of those who have already gloriously finished their course and have completed this holy battle through the sweat of their brows. I can attest that this is true from the evidence of a holy old man, a monk of Clairvaux who received from the Lord the gift of knowing things

> unseen. According to him, the souls of those who have been delivered from their bodies are much more eager to help those who are dying than those who still have many days before them. He said that in the last extremity they display very active charity in defending them against the accusations of infernal spirits intent on their ruin, and in introducing them into the abode of true light and heavenly felicity.

In order to improve the English, we had to reconsider both word order and sentence structure. First, the placement of the question: by beginning with the question, and rhetorically continuing with it, we could begin emphatically with Conrad's main point, and reflect his style. Furthermore, our English was then freed to make his point more clearly, to reflect parallelisms in the writing (*Nec solum . . .credenda est/etiam multo magis speranda est*; and *non minori, vel potius maior*), hint at his alliteration (*malignorum spirituum . . . malitiosas accusationes*), and give a more complete sense of his vocabulary and manner of expression (*iam carne solutas*). All of that, and three fewer words in the translation! Below is the published version, again with major changes italicized.

EM 6.4 (Ward and Savage, 524):

> Moreover, *who would doubt that the abundant goodness of God sometimes grants certain men the grace to find in the merits of others what they lack in themselves*? If one of these, although feeble and imperfect, has the privilege of being associated with perfect religious *observance*, who can doubt that all of his imperfections will be covered by their sanctity, provided that *when* these weak souls leave this world they show here below a sincere love of goodness and virtue and try as hard as they can to imitate *the sanctity and regularity of the others*; as the psalmist says, "With the holy you shall be holy and with the innocent man you will be innocent." [Ps 17.26] Not *only must it be believed* that any religious community supports and protects the weak by the merits and prayers of its members still *struggling strenuously* in this flesh of sin [Rom 8.3] and guards their exit, but even *more must it be hoped that* it will achieve this by its glorious members who have *merited blessed rest* after the sweat of completing this holy warfare. To this a *perfectly observant senior among the brothers* of Clairvaux who had received from the Lord the gift of seeing invisible things has borne witness, saying that the souls of dying brothers, *already set free from their bodies*, were helped *not less but more strongly* by the devotion of those still living in the flesh, so that these souls might be enabled to evade the *malicious accusations of the malign spirits* coming at them with great ferocity and that they would be able to share in the true light and eternal happiness.

Such are the challenges presented to a translator. To step back from these examples, one may see that our concern was to avoid the temptation to recast entirely what was written in order to align it with contemporary idiom. To do so would no doubt make for a more readable, more pleasant translation, one that would flow more smoothly and more closely meet the aesthetic norms of the twenty-first century. However, this would also close off the reader from the mode of expression of twelfth-century monastic Latin and partially defeat the purpose of the translation serving as a portal through which

a reader might approach the *Exordium magnum*. An academic translation should bring to mind the author's mode of expression in such a way that a scholar might see research possibilities worth pursuing, and a more general reader may be initiated into the sensibilities of the author's world.

The possibilities for collaborative translation

Interwoven throughout the above discussion is the fact that these decisions were made between two translators. Collaboration raises both problems and possibilities, but for a project the size of the *Exordium magnum* the benefits are substantial. To one degree or another, Sr Benedicta and I worked together on the EM for nearly 20 years, and while we were not consciously aware of it, the above issues concerning academic translation were present throughout. To deal with these issues Benedicta and I were able to solve problems, in part, because of our different strengths. Sr Benedicta has a remarkable, instinctive sense of both Latin and English; she is able to work through all but Conrad's most baffling Latin with speed and elegance, though much of his most problematic language will be temporarily left aside. I am a plodder in Latin, having begun relatively late (at age 27) and take some satisfaction in accounting for as much of what an author wrote as possible. Thus, at any point one of us could remain actively engaged in what would otherwise have become an onerous trial. Additionally, collaboration helps enforce a unity of vision for how the translation will be done, assuming that there is such unity. Indeed, our first challenge was to arrive at a productive strategy by which two such disparate translators could work.

The central issue in developing a unified approach is to work out a manner in which both translators will consistently transfer the author's voice, grammar, vocabulary and style. This is especially necessary on a large project like the EM. We came to realize this dilemma over time, and our journey was an interesting one. At the urging of Brian Patrick McGuire, I wrote Sr Benedicta in 1992 to inquire about her views on Conrad's authorship of the EM, and to see if she was then engaged on any further study of the book. I was working on my dissertation at the time and wanted to account for the opinions of the few scholars who had examined the text. McGuire had also mentioned that Sr Benedicta had begun a translation of the work, and I asked about her progress. In September, I received a response saying that, while she once wondered if Conrad alone had compiled the entire text, she had in effect moved on, and hadn't much considered it of late. She was no longer engaged in research on the EM and wished me well. Regarding the translation, she said she had indeed begun one, but was hindered by the fact that it was only on typescript, having begun nearly 20 years before, and that many other projects had impinged on her time. She then proposed: 'perhaps we could do a joint translation if you are already engaged in a version?'[13] Needless to say, I responded affirmatively, and for the next 6 months we exchanged letters until, in June 1993, I received her rough draft of Book Two, which I was to enter into the computer.

[13] Letter, Sr Benedicta Ward to Paul Savage, 18 September 1992.

For the first 7 years we not so much collaborated on a translation as I transcribed all of our respective first drafts into a computerized format. There were impediments to our working together that took us a while to recognize: we were a great distance apart; I was teaching and completing my dissertation; we did not know one another aside from letters and email, and as a result had no basis on which to approach the text together. Nonetheless, we agreed that the first task was to get all of our work – her rough draft and my chunks – into one set of Microsoft Word documents. We felt that we should not divide the task of preparing the manuscript for publication because this would create needless confusion. In collaboration there should be one person alone in charge of the final product; the complete version of our translation was 672 pages and to divide this between two or more parties would invite mistakes and confusion. Each of Conrad's six *distinctiones* became one MS Word file, with Benedicta's draft first, followed by my working translation. Between summer 1993 and early 2000, I had merged all of our material into six documents. We originally intended to work from paper copy, marking it up and exchanging passages, while my computer files would constitute the 'official' manuscript, remaining unchanged until we both agreed on a final version.

Once everything was in the computer we felt we were ready for proper work on the translation, but alas, this did not happen. Nothing happened because we still lacked the professional relationship necessary for a productive collaboration. Each had no idea of how the other worked, no mutual understanding of how we wanted to render Conrad's Latin style and little sense of where to begin. There were logistical realities that we had not considered: should one of us do Book One, the other Book Two, and then trade off? Were we both to go through Book One and then exchange copies? Which version would go into the computer? After several months we realized that we were at an impasse. In December 2000 I emailed Sr Benedicta, saying that if she had time over the summer, I would come to Oxford so that we could work together on the translation for however long she could spare. I proposed that we had to work together if we were to develop a means by which to approach this rather immense thing that is the EM. She agreed, I managed to secure a flat near where she lived, and we thus spent 3 weeks in July 2001 sitting across from one another at a six-foot table, translating Books One and Two word-for-word, line-for-line, generally finding that we had to change a great deal in our old drafts.

Upon reflection, this sustained period of working together was essential for the success of the project. Our collaborative effort was notably different from the drafts with which we began. It was notably better as well. We had, through this mutual effort, developed a common voice; and a common approach to the text emerged as we winnowed out what we liked and disliked about one another's work. When we discussed how to handle a particular sentence, we were in effect establishing how we would approach the entire text. We laid the ground rules and enabled each other to work independently in such a way that we could merge our work into a coherent whole. We learnt how each other worked, and arrived at a mutual understanding of Conrad's voice and how to translate that voice into English.

At the conclusion of our 3 weeks we decided to work on the next two *distinctiones* independently: Benedicta took Book Three, I had Four. We would completely

re-translate our *distinctione*, and then mail our work to one another for comments and changes.[14] We placed a one-year limit on this, and pledged to harass one another into completing our respective tasks. We met our goals, and by August 2002 had exchanged our new versions and were in the process of marking up one another's work. With regard to what went into the computer: for Benedicta's Book Three, I entered any of her suggestions with which I agreed (virtually all), and emailed her about those passages that required discussion. As to my work, Benedicta returned a paper copy of Book Four with her suggestions noted and I followed the above procedure; we exchanged email regarding individual preferences until one of us relented. We had thus finished Books One through Four by the end of 2002, and then parcelled out the last two *distinctiones*: she took Book Six, I had Book Five.

At this point another benefit of collaboration became clear: two determined, ruthless co-workers keep one another motivated in the face of fatigue and resistance, which is to say that we hit a wall in 2003. After nearly 6 months, Benedicta was less than halfway through Book Six and I was barely a third into Book Five. That was as far as we got, and by 2004, and we were both weary of the project. But collaboration enforces discipline, and we decided to repeat our earlier face-to-face translation sessions, this time for Books Five and Six. We thus spent three more weeks translating together in summer 2004. And this time we went much faster. Indeed we finished Books Five and Six, and revisited some of Book Three as well. Working in this way was a formative experience for me. I don't presume to speak from Sr Benedicta's perspective, but one thing is clear: neither of us would have completed this translation without the other. Our collaboration was a necessary condition for completion, and in the final analysis it markedly improved the quality of the final product.

After several more emails and minor revisions, we were finished on 8 November 2005, and I sent two emails to Rozanne Elder, our editor at Cistercian Publications; attached were the six files of our translation of *The Great Beginning of Cîteaux*. From autumn 2006 through 2007 Rozanne went through the files, noting her suggestions for change.[15] Benedicta and I continued our division of labour throughout the editorial process: all direct correspondence regarding the translation was between Rozanne Elder and myself. I would approve minor changes and forward major ones to Sr Benedicta via email. Benedicta also received electronic versions of the final copies of each translated Book with subsequent changes in bold for her approval. All of this worked smoothly and made for a very orderly editing process.

Near the end of the process, we were fortunate to extend further the collaboration when Rozanne Elder took a sabbatical in Oxford for parts of 2010–11. Sensing an opportunity for a final read-through, I emailed Sr Benedicta and Rozanne with the suggestion that the three of us could meet in Oxford the week of 26 March through 1 April 2011 to finalize the manuscript for submission to Cistercian Publications/Liturgical Press. This we did, with Rozanne handling the computerized format while the three of us reviewed the entire manuscript, frequently consulting Grießer's Latin

[14] Email was still a bit problematic for exchanging attachments in 2001, especially in England, but by 2004 we were regularly exchanging passages and entire documents online.

[15] Rozanne Elder's comments and suggestions are a forceful argument for the necessity of quality editing.

edition. Even at this late stage we made several changes in spite of the fact that Benedicta and I had gone through much of the text half-a-dozen times or more, and that Rozanne had combed through the entire translation comparing it to Grießer.

In the end, academic translation must balance two sometimes competing interests: it should reflect accurately all of what an author wrote, it should keep to the imagery and tone of its period, yet it also needs to be smooth and clearly understandable to a reader of our time. Not a simple task.[16] In the case of the Latin found in the *Exordium magnum*, such a balance is only possible after much preparation and review, work that is improved by a process of collaboration. Academic translators should reflect more consciously on the nature of this preparation and review, as well as consider how to balance the often-conflicting modes of expression found in Latin and English.[17] By examining how we can use contemporary English to convey the imagery and sensibility of the past we can hope to improve the accuracy and reliability of our work. This would represent a benefit for both scholars and the educated reading public, because it would allow both more ready access to the essentially foreign world of the past. To echo the words of an accomplished novelist: we usually speak about what is lost in translation; this article is an attempt to encourage the idea that something may also be gained.[18]

[16] In spite of the work required for high-quality academic translation, it is rarely considered rigorous enough to qualify substantially in tenure and retention decisions. This is unfortunate and should be examined: the synthesis of scholarship necessarily involved in explicating a text like the EM merits consideration as proper scholarly activity. One can make the same observation for serious academic editing, also undervalued in the academy. If these pursuits continue to be relatively unrewarded, one suspects that the quality of both will suffer.

[17] See Marie Anne Mayeski, 'Putting on the Mind of Ælred: Reflections of a Translator', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 47 (2012), pp. 127–35 for a recent example.

[18] The thought comes from Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (London: Granta/Viking, 1991), p. 17: 'It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.' Rushdie was not writing necessarily about linguistic translation, but the *translatio* of writers and persons across borders. The metaphor of *translatio* – of bearing something across (across a border, or across time) – is intriguing for the writing of history itself, but that is for another essay.

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'Desire for the Eternal Country': The Laity and the Wider World of Monastic Prayer in Medieval England*

Brian Golding

There is an apparent paradox at the heart of medieval monasticism. Monks and nuns were set apart from the world, and central to the programme of many reformers was the call for that withdrawal to be made stronger, as, for example, the early Cistercian statutes make clear. While it goes too far to argue that monks were neither concerned with secular society nor had any impact on it, it remains true that monks conceived of themselves and were so conceived as separate, in the world but not of it.[1] Monastic precincts were normally enclosed with a wall, which was as much symbolic as functional. The monastery was a contained sacred space, as depicted ideally in the 'Plan of St Gall', or more realistically in the twelfth-century plan of Canterbury cathedral priory with its wall, the *murus curie*, carefully delineated with a gap between it and the *murus civitatis*, a sacred city within the secular city.[2] But the monastery was not only a *civitas*, it was a *paradisus*, a garden enclosed. As Anselm observed, the enclosed life was a sort of paradise in this life.[3] The word *paradisus* was applied to the churchyard, or, as at Peterborough, to the ground between the abbey gate and the great church, or to the entrance, the narthex, of the church. The monastery (or part of it) was also literally a garden, with the herb and vegetable gardens and orchard in the St Gall plan, and the *herbarium* within Canterbury's cloister, the enclosed heart of the monastic complex, a reminder that a monastic cloister did not surround, as often today, a square of grass,

* This paper is offered to Sister Benedicta for whose own prayers I shall be always grateful.

1 See Ludo J. R. Milis, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men: Monasticism and its Meaning in Medieval Society* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1992).

2 For the St Gall plan see especially Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St Gall* (3 vols., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) and www.stgallplan.org; for Canterbury, William Urry, 'Canterbury, Kent, c. 1153', in Raleigh A. Skelton and Paul D. A. Harvey (eds.), *Local Maps and Plans from Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 43–58; Francis Woodman, 'The waterworks drawings of the Eadwine Psalter', in Margaret Gibson et al. (eds.), *The Eadwine Psalter: Text, Image and Monastic Culture in Twelfth-Century Canterbury* (London and University Park, PA; Pennsylvania State University Press,1992), pp. 168–77.

3 *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. and annotated by Walter Fröhlich (3 vols., Cistercian Studies Series, 142, Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo (Michigan, 1994), iii. 189 (no. 418).

but contained a garden and frequently a fountain. The monastery thus mirrored the celestial city and paradise.[4]

At the same time its wall was a porous border between lay and monastic. Its gatehouse was often, as for example, at Kirkham, Butley and Llanthony secunda, emblazoned with the armorial shields of the community's patrons, linking both worlds, and revealing the fundamental symbiotic relationship between lay and monastic, which I am considering in this paper. Neither were the cloister or the church wholly sacrosanct. While *stabilitas*, which lay at the core of western monasticism, insisted that religious might not leave their house, the laity were frequent visitors in spite of prohibitions, especially on entering nunneries.[5] And though the *claustrum* might be closed to the living laity, in death many lay people found burial either there or in the chapter-house, the administrative core of the community, as the church was its spiritual heart.

Above all these borders were crossed by prayer. In his recent masterly study of poverty and wealth in the late-Antique Christian West Peter Brown has argued that the sixth century saw a fundamental shift 'from the poor to the monks as the primary intercessors for the sins of all Christians'. Alms previously given to the poor were now focused on religious communities, which Brown has elsewhere characterized as 'powerhouses of prayer'.[6] Powerhouses they remained throughout the Middle Ages: the *longue durée* of monastic intercession survived till the forcible Dissolution, though, as we shall see, by the end there were increasing challenges to this spiritual dominance.

When men and women in medieval England granted land, the normal transactional currency, to religious communities they gave alms, the property was made over *in*

[4] The concept of the monastery echoing the heavenly city is also found in early Christian Ireland, where the 'monastic cities' some of which, like Glendalough, were defended by a fortified gatehouse, have long been the subject of research. The fundamental introduction which remains invaluable, though some of its conclusions have been challenged, is Charles Doherty, 'The monastic town in early medieval Ireland', in Howard B. Clarke and Anngret Simms (eds.), *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in Non – Roman Europe* (2 vols., British Archaeological Reports International Series, 255, 1985), i. 45–76. See also Leo Swan, 'Monastic Proto-towns in Early Medieval Ireland', in ibid, i. 103–46; John Bradley, 'The monastic town of Clonmacnoise', in Heather King (ed.), *Clonmacnoise Studies, I, Seminar Papers 1994* (Dublin: Dúchas, the Heritage Service, 1998), pp. 42–55. I am grateful to Tracy Collins for discussing this with me. Honorius Augustodunensis provides the fullest symbolic interpretation in *Gemma Animae* i. c. cxlix, 'Quod claustrum sit paradisus' (*PL* 172, col. 590). See also Paul Meyvaert, 'The Medieval Monastic Garden', in Elisabeth B. MacDougall (ed.), *Medieval Gardens*, (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986), pp. 25–53. I am very grateful to Dr Jeffrey West for his help and guidance here.

[5] Though monasteries might legislate against and strive to prevent the entry of living women to their precincts, once dead, women could be entered into the community in the same way as men, and receive the same spiritual benefits. A grant of fraternity, too, might necessitate the female benefactor's presence in chapter (*The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. and trans. by David Knowles and Christopher N. L. Brooke (revised edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 170–1). And nuns might well receive male benefactors into their fraternity. Prayers transcended the boundaries of gender.

[6] Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 514–17; *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* (2nd edn., Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), chapter. 9, pp. 219–31. See also, amid a substantial literature, Mayke De Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer', in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995–98), pp. 622–53.

liberam, puram et perpetuam elemosinam: in other words (in theory, at least) no earthly service was required in recompense. In practice grants were frequently made in alms for which not only prayers, but earthly rewards, one-off cash payments or rents, were expected. When Walter de Scoteni and his wife gave the church of Willingham in free alms to the Gilbertine priory of Sixhills they made it 'reserving no earthly advantage to ourselves . . . that it may more abundantly profit our souls in the future', explicitly recognizing the greater worth of such unsullied grants.[7]

In such transactions there was always a counter-gift, a reciprocity in the relationship.[8] For the temporal, the benefactor received (and expected) the eternal, for land, prayers. It is facile to regard these grants cynically as 'acts of conspicuous charity', as 'plea bargains', as Iain Sinclair wrote in a recent review.[9] Nevertheless, when the twelfth-century Premonstratensian ordinal openly stated that the amount of prayer offered in masses and psalms for the dead should be in proportion to the alms given it is easy to see how such an interpretation might have arisen, and that a more nuanced relationship went unperceived![10] Such prayers were for the living and the dead, for ancestors and for generations yet to come, they constituted an eternal nexus of intercession: prayer was the cement of community, binding all together. When duke William of Normandy pledged to found an abbey in thanksgiving if granted victory at Hastings he said that it would be 'for the salvation of all . . . atoning for the bloodshed by an everlasting chain of good works', recognizing, albeit in very particular circumstances, the role of monastic prayer in lay society.[11]

In the *Song of Roland* archbishop Turpin addresses the hero, praising his prowess. He observes that a knight who is not valorous is 'not worth four pennies, otherwise he

[7] *Transcripts of Charters relating to Gilbertine Houses*, ed. by Frank M. Stenton (Lincoln Record Series, 18, 1922), p. 13 (no. 24). On the development of the legal concept of free alms see now especially Benjamin Thompson, 'From "alms" to "spiritual services": the Function and Status of Monastic Property in Medieval England', *Monastic Studies* 2 (1990), pp. 227–62; 'Free Alms Tenure in the Twelfth Century', *Anglo – Norman Studies* 16 (1993), pp. 221–43.

[8] From a vast, and almost unmanageable, literature, which has concentrated on continental western Europe, and notably, Cluny, rather than Britain, I choose in particular, Stephen D. White, *Custom, Kinship and Gifts to Saints: the* Laudatio Parentum *in Western France, 1050–1150* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Patrick J. Geary, 'Exchange and Interaction Between the Living and the Dead in Early Medieval Society', in *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 77–94; Eliana Magnani S.- Christen, 'Transforming Things and Persons; the Gift *pro anima* in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen (eds.), *Negotiating the Gift; Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 2003), pp. 269–84; Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: the Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Arnold Angenendt, '*Donationes pro anima*: Gift and Counter-gift in the Early Medieval Liturgy', in John R. Davies and M. McCormick (eds.), *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 131–54. A perceptive regional treatment is Emilia Jamroziak, 'Making and Breaking the Bonds: Yorkshire Cistercians and their Neighbours', in Terryl Kinder (ed.), *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercian Art and Architecture in Honor of Peter Fergusson* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 65–70.

[9] Iain Sinclair reviewing Carl Watkins, *The Undiscovered Country: Journeys among the Dead* in *Guardian*: *Review,* 12 January 2013, p. 8.

[10] *L'Ordinaire de Prémontré d'après des manuscrits du XIIe et du* XIIIe siècle, ed. by Placide F. Lefèvre (Bibliothèque de la Revue d'Histroire Ecclésiastique, 22, Louvain 1941), p. 123.

[11] *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and trans. by Eleanor Searle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 66–7.

should be in one of those monasteries praying every day for our sins'.[12] Here, couched forthrightly, is the classic distinction between those who fight and those who pray. This is not, of course, to say that the laity were not expected to pray, but those expectations were limited to a requirement to know the creed, paternoster, *ave* and general confession.[13] Many individuals had indeed an active prayer life, as surviving books of hours and psalters bear witness, but monks were the specialists, the professionals, their work was the *opus Dei*, prayer was what they were expected to do, their role in the spiritual economy.

But what did lay benefactors expect from the religious? King Hlothhere of Kent's grant of land to St Augustine's, Canterbury in 675 and the earliest surviving genuine English charter was made 'for the salvation of my soul and the remission of my sins' and 'for my soul's eternal reward'.[14] By this time the mutual relationship between benefactor and community was well established, but its exact nature is not defined here. Was the act of giving sufficient in itself to procure salvation, or were specific prayers required? And if the latter, what were their nature, how and when were they offered? A generation later, King Wihtred of Kent made a grant to the same house 'ut nostri memoriam habeatis tam in missarum solemniis quam in orationibus vestris', and by the beginning of the ninth century charters might articulate commemorative and salvific expectations much more clearly.[15] Ealdorman Oswulf's early ninth-century grant to Christ Church, Canterbury sets out liturgical stage directions in detail that is more often associated with the later Middle Ages. He asks to be admitted into fraternity, and that his anniversary, which was to be proclaimed throughout the city, be celebrated with great ceremony, lavish almsgiving, as was done for the anniversaries of lords, and an equally lavish feast, 'that you may be blessed in the sight of the world with worldly benefits, and their souls may be blessed with heavenly benefits', thus making explicit the reciprocal transaction.[16]

Oswulf's charter is exceptional for its date: in general we find a growing precision in setting out prayer requirements, in particular in post-mortem performance. This was driven by increasing anxiety concerning the afterlife. Though this is not the place

[12] *Le Chanson de Roland: Student Edition, Oxford Text and English Translation*, ed. by Gerard J. Brault (University Park, PA and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984), p. 116 (laisse 141, ll. 1876–82). I am grateful to Professor Bella Millett for this reference.

[13] See, for example, the diocesan statutes of bishop Richard of Chichester (*Councils and Synods, with other Documents relating to the English Church. II, A.D. 1205–1313*, eds. by F. Maurice Powicke and Christopher R. Cheney (2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), ii. 465 (c. 70)).

[14] *Charters of St Augustine's Canterbury and Minster-in-Thanet*, ed. by Susan E. Kelly (Anglo-Saxon Charters iv, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 26–7 (no. 6).

[15] Ibid., p. 36 (no. 9).

[16] Florence E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), pp. 39–40 (no. 1). Unsurprisingly this charter has attracted much attention: see, for example, Julia Crick, 'Church, Land and Local Nobility in Early Ninth-Century Kent: the Case of Ealdorman Oswulf', *Historical Research* 61 (1988), pp. 251–69; *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester, British Library Stowe 944, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. viii and British Library Cotton Titus D. xxvii*, ed. by Simon Keynes (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1996), p. 54. A little later king Beorhtwulf of Mercia expected from Breedon on the Hill 100 psalters and 120 masses said 12 times (perhaps monthly for a year) for himself, his friends, and 'the whole Mercian people' (*Anglo – Saxon Charters 14 Peterborough Abbey*, ed. by Susan E. Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 366, app. 3).

for a discussion of the controversial origins and meaning of purgatory, it is undeniably true that at least from the late eleventh century a more urgent emphasis on prayers for the dead was driven by the purgatorial imperative and Odilo of Cluny's promotion of the observance of All Souls day.[17] Lanfranc, for example, expected all priests in his community to celebrate masses for the faithful departed on All Souls day, the full office was to be said for 7 days, and for 30 days, the psalms *Voce mea* and *Verba mea*.[18]

Oswulf's stipulations may be compared with the equally detailed ones made at Westminster for Queen Eleanor of Castile in 1290, who was commemorated with both a weekly and annual anniversary. The whole community was expected to assemble with the tolling of bells in the abbey church every week on the day preceding her anniversary to sing the *Placebo* and *Dirige*, together with the nine lessons for the dead. The following day a solemn mass was to be sung and a generous provision made for 140 poor men who should say the paternoster, creed and *ave*. Precise instructions were given as to the weight of candles to be burnt on the annual anniversary, the vestments to be worn, and how the liturgy was to be sung antiphonally. In a manner rather reminiscent of the public proclamation made of Oswulf's anniversary all these arrangements were to be read *verbatim* in the presence of the whole chapter.[19]

At about the same time as Edward I was providing for the spiritual support of his queen at Westminster his cousin Edmund, earl of Cornwall, was establishing a new religious community to pray for *his* family at Ashridge. The statutes of his college of Bonshommes, founded in 1283, contain detailed regulations for the founder and his family's commemoration. Every day after faults had been corrected in chapter, prayers were to be said for Edmund and all benefactors, living and dead. The psalms, *Ad te levavi* and *De profundis* were to be said together with the prayers, *Deus caritatis dona* et *Fidelium dominus*. This represents a departure from the five psalms laid down in the *Regularis Concordia* to be sung for the dead, only the *De profundis* being retained.[20] At every votive mass the brethren were to recite a special prayer for the founder. Full anniversaries were only to be celebrated for himself, his parents, his kinsman, Peter, count of Alençon, and kinswoman, Beatrice, countess of Richmond. These anniversaries were explicitly stated to be *principales*. In the case of other anniversaries,

[17] The classic modern analysis (though by no means unchallenged) of the medieval concept of purgatory remains Jacques le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (London: Scolar Press: London, 1984). Among many reviews see Richard W. Southern, 'Between Heaven and Hell', *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 June 1982, pp. 651–2. Of fundamental importance is Megan McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 178–249. For All Souls' Day see Jotsald, *Vita Odilonis et Carmina auctore Iotsaldo*, ed. by Johannes Staub (Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores Rerum Germanicorum in Usum Scholarum, 68 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1999), pp. 219–20; Jacques Hourlier, 'Saint Odilon et la fête des morts', *Revue Gregorienne* 28 (1949), pp. 2019–12.

[18] *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 94–6.

[19] *Calendar of Charter Rolls* ii. 411, 424–6. See Barbara Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 31–3, 393, and *Living and Dying in England, 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 27. See also Christopher R. Cheney, 'A Monastic Letter of Fraternity to Eleanor of Aquitaine', *English Historical Review* 51 (1936), pp. 488–93 for two similarly detailed twelfth-century examples, to Eleanor of Aquitaine and Stephen, count of Brittany.

[20] *Regularis Concordia*, trans. from the Latin with introduction and notes by Thomas Symons (London etc: Nelson, 1953), p. 20.

either of members of the community or others, if several fell in one week they were all to be celebrated together on a day to be determined by the brethren.[21]

However, Edmund's endowment was very modest and the house soon encountered difficulties. So in 1376 it was refounded by Edward, prince of Wales (the 'Black Prince'). Edward's will and the revised statutes make it clear that he regarded himself as the true founder, and, significantly, these statutes omit any reference to prayers for Edmund and his kin. Instead, in 1379 Ashridge's rector wrote that the community was obliged especially to pray for the souls of Edward and Sir John de Grey, one of the prince's companions in arms.[22] Thus a change of patron was reflected in the daily liturgy.

But it was not just royalty and the higher aristocracy who planned monastic prayers with such care. Walter of Sneinton specified the collects he wished to be used when mass was said for him at Dale abbey. He gave land for the maintenance of one canon saying the mass of the BVM 'with two candles burning for as long as the mass should last'. While he lived the second collect should be *Deus qui caritatis*, and following his death the collect *Inclina* should be used. In addition he provided for the maintenance of another canon who was to celebrate a mass *pro defunctis* in which there should be special commemoration of himself. *Deus qui caritatis* was a collect frequently found in masses for familiars and benefactors, as it is, for example, in the Gilbertine and Sarum Missals: *Inclina domine aurem tuam* was found in the burial mass and the trental mass, it is not in any of the masses of the Virgin.[23] Walter, in asking for these collects, and thus amending the standard form of the Marian mass is emphasizing his role as patron, alive and dead.

Though William de Bracklesham was not a lay man (he was chancellor and dean of Chichester) the provision he made for his parents' souls in 1266 at Durford priory indicates what the laity might expect in commemorative prayer. A canon serving a weekly rota would celebrate daily for William's father, with the collect, *Inclina*, and for his mother, *Quesumus Domine* (for a mass for a dead woman) should be used. The canon was to celebrate a weekly mass of the Holy Spirit, a mass of the BVM, the ordained mass for a solemn feast, and if there was none, a mass for the dead. The collects for the office for the dead, *Dirige* (used at Matins) and *Placebo* (used at Vespers) were also to be used, and the commendation was to be for them. The whole agreement was entered in the priory's *martyrologium*.[24]

The recording of these obligations in *martyrologia* and kindred texts was much more practical than the consultation of charters, such as those discussed above and countless thousands like them. Though these constituted both legal documents and statements of intent and theoretically functioned as a constant reminder of responsibilities, their very number alone must have precluded their use on a regular basis: they

[21] Henry J. Todd, *The History of the College of Bonhommes at Ashridge* (London: R. Gilbert, 1823), pp. 12, 14.

[22] Ibid., pp. 14–16.

[23] *The Cartulary of Dale Abbey*, ed. by Avrom Saltman (London: HMSO, 1967), p. 122 and n.; *The Gilbertine Rite*, ed. by Reginald M. Woolley (2 vols., London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 59–60, 1921–22), ii. 226; *The Sarum Missal Edited from Three Early Manuscripts*, ed. by J. Wickham Legg (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1916, repr. 1969), 392, 439, 446.

[24] *The Durford Cartulary*, ed. by Janet H. Stevenson (Sussex Record Society, 90, 2006), pp. 104–5 (no. 355).

were for archiving, not display. Arranged in a cartulary, they were potentially easier to use, though there is little evidence that cartularies were employed for this purpose.[25] In the early fourteenth century William and Johanna of Cockington wished their bodies to be buried in the abbey church of Torre (and indeed the couple's grave has recently been identified in the nave), a weekly mass celebrated in their parish church and a mass every second day before the altar of St John the Baptist in the abbey. Walter further stipulated that his charter, or its tenor, be displayed next to his tomb 'so that all who pass by can see, read, and understand'.[26] This requirement is extremely unusual, if not unique. We cannot know if such display was commonplace, though unnoted: it is certainly the case that late-medieval stained glass panels occasionally depict benefactors with their charters, as at Great Malvern, and the St Alban's *Liber benefactorum* contains numerous vignettes of donors holding their charters, but these are representational, at Torre the actual charter was exhibited for all to see. Walter is proclaiming his pious giving to all visitors, both monastic and lay (for the nave of the church would have been open to the laity); he is explaining why he is buried where he is, and he is ensuring that all readers know that he is expecting the community's prayers.

In discussing spiritual benefits for the laity it is customary to divide those offered to the living from those for the dead, and this is the pattern that will be followed for convenience here. But it is essential to emphasize that such a disjuncture was neither perceived nor understood by benefactor or beneficiary, rather there was a seamless web of spiritual exchange.[27] As the examples given above indicate, benefactors frequently acquired a 'package' of benefits, including confraternity, masses, anniversaries, obits and burial, but whether there was a hierarchy of such services for the laity is hard to determine. Some donors kept their benefit options and the potential extent of their relationship with the religious open. William of Westby, for example, gave land to Stixwould on condition that he, his parents and all his kin be made participants in all the nunnery's benefits, that if he died his body should be received for burial as for one of the brethren, and that if instead he chose to enter the house he should be received 'honorifice'.[28]

It must also be remembered that though this paper focuses on prayers that were offered permanently for benefactors, living and dead, they could also be sought for specific, ad hoc and usually, therefore, temporary reasons, such as when Roger de Mowbray when confirming to the monks of Garendon whatever property his mother might give them asked for their prayers while he was on the second crusade (1147) on which he was shortly to embark. We should not here understand general liturgical

[25] But see Emilia Jamroziak's recent discussion of the Rievaulx cartulary, 'How Rievaulx Abbey Remembered its Benefactors', in Emilia M. Jamroziak and Janet E. Burton (eds.), *Religious and Laity in Northern Europe, 1000–1400: Interaction, Negotiation and Power* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 63–76.

[26] *The Exchequer Cartulary of Torre Abbey (PRO 164/19)*, ed. by Deryck Seymour (Torquay: Friends of Torre Abbey, 2000), pp. 434–5 (no. 268). See also pp. 432–5 (no. 267) and John C. Jenkins, 'Torre Abbey: Locality, Community and Society in Medieval England', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2010, pp. 141–2.

[27] Thus Stephen of Brittany was to have a daily mass sung for him, 'vivente vel mortuo' (Cheney, 'Monastic Letter', p. 490).

[28] *Documents illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw, from Various Collections*, ed. by Frank M. Stenton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920), pp. 283–4 (no. 380).

prayers for the crusade's success, but a request for the monks to remember their benefactor at a particularly hazardous time.[29] Perhaps many of the grants made by a prospective crusader or other traveller in return for a money payment to finance his expedition were also similarly accompanied by prayers for his safe home-coming.[30]

Though the majority of grants to religious houses were made simply using the standard *in puram elemosinam* formula (and it is a cause for surprise and comment when they do not), and expecting general prayers for salvation, many looked for more specific favours.[31] While all had sinned and expiation was necessary, sometimes specific individual acts, usually of violence, lay behind a request for prayers. Roger de Clere acknowledged God's help in acquiring a knight's fee in Fotherby by duel in the royal court, but gave part of his gains to Ormsby priory for his soul. Was this pure thanksgiving, or a recognition that his claim to the land was suspect, or perhaps that duels, a form of judicial ordeal, were increasingly questionable in the Church's eye?[32] Ralph de Tosny III promised lands in both Normandy and England to St Evroult abbey in recompense for helping to destroy the town of St Evroult by fire some 40 years before. He went so far as to leave his doctor, Goisbert, at the monastery as a sort of 'spiritual hostage' as a mark of his good faith.[33] Richard de Sauci gave a church in Devon to Montebourg abbey in absolution of his crime in assisting his lord to steal a considerable sum of money from the monks on the Isle of Wight.[34] Robert de Ferrers II put it succinctly in a confirmation grant to Tutbury priory: it was done 'that God might pardon all the sins that I have committed'.[35]

Prayers for benefactors were built into the daily monastic round. The *Regularis Concordia* ordained intercessions for the king and all those 'by whose gifts (*beneficiis*) we are maintained', taking care not to say them too quickly.[36] These prayers were almost constant, psalms for the king, queen and benefactors being said after every office, except Prime, and at every Mass.[37] Clearly not every individual benefactor could be mentioned by name at these times, and it was realistic of the author of the proem to the Winchester *liber vitae*, who, when setting out detailed instructions as to how the names of those commemorated should be read out at the daily mass, noted that this should be 'as far as time allows'.[38]

[29] *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray, 1107–1191*, ed. by Diana E. Greenway (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 116 (no. 155).

[30] See, for example, the confirmation made by Thomas Bardolf of his father-in-law's grants to Catley priory made 'for the prosperity of our journey now with the favour of God begun' (*Transcripts of Charters*, p. 74 (no. 2)).

[31] It was not unknown for a grant to be made to a layman *pro salute* (Joan Wardrop, *Fountains Abbey and its Benefactors, 1132–1300* (Cistercian Studies, 91, Kalamazoo, 1987), p. 142, n. 25).

[32] *Transcripts of Charters*, p. 43 (no. 9).

[33] See *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. by Marjorie Chibnall (6 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968–80), iii. 124–6.

[34] *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon*, ed. by Robert Bearman (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, n.s. 37, 1994), pp. 183–4. This theft was probably, though not certainly, committed during the unrest of Stephen's reign.

[35] *The Cartulary of Tutbury Priory*, ed. by Avrom Saltman (Historic Manuscripts Commission, HMSO, 1962), p. 66 (no. 52).

[36] *Regularis Concordia*, p. 5. See also *Liber Vitae*, pp. 82–3.

[37] *Regularis Concordia*, pp. 14, 16, 20–3.

[38] *Liber Vitae*, pp. 82–3.

While all benefactions in free alms by definition received the counter-gift of prayer, a grant of confraternity represented a higher associative level, sometimes including the possibility of later reception into the community as a religious or burial within the abbey.[39] They received special intercessions: the *Regularis Concordia* laid down that when news arrived that those specially connected with a monastery (by whom we should probably understand *confratres*) were very ill, the whole house should immediately come together and pray for them.[40] A similar practice was followed at Lanfranc's Canterbury: the *Constitutions* refers to monks prostrating themselves at the daily chapter and asking prayers for one of their kin who has recently died.[41] Confraternity privileges might also involve a financial inducement or negotiation. The subtleties of such arrangements are well illustrated by those Hugh, earl of Chester, entered into with Abingdon at the end of the eleventh century. He had acquired one of the abbey's manors in post-Conquest tenurial uncertainty. The abbot and the earl's own wife and vassals urged him to restore this property, and in a letter to the abbot Hugh agreed to restore the manor in return for £30, fraternity, prayers for his wife and parents, the agreement that their names be written in the book of commemorations, and the promise that at death they should receive the same funeral as one of the monks.[42] Sometimes an annual sum was paid for a fraternity grant, perhaps as a down payment in the expectation that a larger grant would follow at death, as when Burscough priory received 4d *per annum* from Richard son of Hugh Lumbart, with the promise of a third of his chattels at death.[43]

This binding together in fellowship often followed apparent disputes, and royal feet of fines are full of fraternity being granted as an element in dispute resolution. However, many such suits were fictive, legal devices to ensure that land transactions were enrolled in the royal courts, and it is rarely possible to determine if these settlements were made following actual conflict. It is hard to believe, for example, that when William de Wyldeaker acknowledged by fine the right of Bardney to the manor of North Carleton in return for the provision of three canons to perform the divine service for Walter and his wife following their death and to celebrate their anniversaries for ever, that this was the result of a real action.[44] An even more elaborate arrangement accompanied Gilbert of Preston's agreement with Sempringham by which the community received Gilbert into all the house's benefits and prayers, and agreed to maintain a canon or secular priest to celebrate for him daily forever. On retirement

[39] See, for example the grant of Gilbert and Alice of Burgh-le-Marsh's grant to Bullington priory (Brian J. Golding, 'The Gilbertine priories of Alvingham and Bullington: their Endowments and Benefactors', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1979, p. 334. Gilbert's statement, 'ego stabo cum eis ex pleno animo sicut frater in necessitatibus suis' encapsulates what communities expected of their *confratres*.

[40] *Regularis Concordia*, pp. 67–8.

[41] *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 166–7.

[42] *Historia ecclesiae Abbendonensis*, ed. and trans by John Hudson (2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002–07), ii. 24–7.

[43] *An Edition of the Cartulary of Burscough Priory*, trans., ed., and introduced by Arthur N. Webb (Manchester: Manchester University Press for the Chetham Society, 18), p. 41 (no. 28).

[44] *Final Concords of the County of Lincoln, 1244–1272*, ed. by Charles W. Foster (Lincoln Record Society, 17, 1920), p. 134. See also Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order, c. 1130 – c. 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 331–2.

or for other cause the celebrant was to be replaced within 8 days, a temporary canon being recruited to cover the vacant period, in order to maintain the perpetuity of prayer, and Gilbert and his heirs could have the use of the chaplain every day within the octave of St Michael.[45]

The names of recipients of confraternity were usually recited during mass and could expect to be recorded in a confraternity list, such as that which survives, but recording monastic rather than lay *confratres*, for St Mary's York, while living, or in a martyrology, obit list (which might give details of the grants made by the benefactor while living, or of the pittances established when dead), or liturgical calendar at death.[46] The *ne plus ultra* of such books of remembrance of both the living and the dead were the *libri vitae*.[47] The earliest to survive date from eighth-century continental Europe: the first English examples are from Durham and Winchester. These are high-status volumes from high-status monasteries. They only exist, and probably only ever existed, from the most prestigious Benedictine abbeys.[48] They were sometimes lavishly illuminated; the late Anglo-Saxon Winchester *Liber Vitae* is one of the masterpieces of its time, while the fourteenth-century St Albans *Liber benefactorum*, though of no great artistic merit, is profusely illustrated with representations of donors and grants it records.[49]

Libri vitae had as much, or more, symbolic as practical value. As Simon Keynes has observed, the term has clear resonances with the Book of Life in Revelations, it mirrored the eternal and final Judgement.[50] Moreover, the names they recorded were laid up before the Lord, lifted up before Him on the principal altar of the monastic church, at the most solemn ritual. And the altar was also very frequently the focal point of the ritual of giving. Thus, for example, when Nigel d'Aubigny confirmed grants made by his tenant to Monks Kirby priory at the beginning of the twelfth century the charter was laid on the altar of St Nicholas (the patron saint of the priory's mother house at Angers) next to the Gospel book.[51] At Alvingham the son (and his wife) of one of the priory's first founders confirmed his father's grants, 'touching the altar of St Mary'.[52] Such gestures may well have taken place within the context of the liturgy: at St Evroult

[45] *Final Concords*, pp. 169–70.

[46] Janet Burton, 'A Confraternity List from St Mary's Abbey, York', *Revue Bénédictine* 89 (1979), pp. 325–33, and see the late thirteenth-century obit list of Oseney abbey found in an *ordinale*, which indicates the date of pittances and sometimes specifies the prayer, 'Deus, indulgentiarum domine' found in the mass 'in anniversario defunctorum' (*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. by Herbert E. Salter (Oxford: The Clarendon Press for the Oxford Historical Society, 89, 1929), pp. xviii–xxviii).

[47] *Libri vitae* have long been the subject of analysis in continental Europe, the essays in David Rollason, A. J. Piper, Margaret Harvey, and Lynda Rollason (eds.), *The Durham* Liber Vitae *and its Context* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004) now constitute the fundamental study in England.

[48] See Keynes, 'The *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster' in *The Durham* Liber Vitae, p. 153.

[49] For the Winchester manuscript (B. L., Stowe 944) see especially *Liber Vitae* and Keynes, 'The *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster, Winchester', pp. 149–64; for St Albans (B. L., MS Cotton Nero D. vii) see James G. Clark, 'Monastic Confraternity in Medieval England: the Evidence from the St Albans Abbey *Liber Benefactorum*', in Jamroziak and Burton (eds.), *Religious and Laity*, pp. 315–31.

[50] *Liber Vitae*, pp. 50, 52. Cf. *Anglo – Saxon Charters 14 Peterborough Abbey*, ed. by Susan E. Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 207 (no. 8).

[51] *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray,* p. 17 (no. 13). See also, e.g., ibid., pp. 79 (no. 106) 70 (no. 107) 108 (no. 141), 112 (no. 145), 148 (no. 209), 181 (no. 268); *The Cartulary of the Priory of St. Gregory, Canterbury*, ed. by Audrey M. Woodcock (Camden Society 3rd series, 88, 1956), p. 107 (no. 143).

[52] *Charters relating to Gilbertine Houses*, p. 106 (no. 8).

Orderic Vitalis records how William de Breteuil's charter was solemnly placed on the high altar which was still damp from the consecration of the abbey church.[53] Gilbert de Morton presented his charter to Rufford abbey on the altar, along with himself to be made a monk, reiterating that should he ever leave the monastery 'the alms which I placed on the altar should in no way be withdrawn'. [54]

Though only a few of the greatest houses had a *liber vitae*, all would have possessed a martyrology recording the names of those benefactors to be commemorated.[55] As we have already seen careful donors took care to ensure that their names were entered.[56] The reading of the martyrology in the daily chapter, which was thus embedded in monastic ritual, served as a constant reminder of the relationship between community and its benefactors.[57]

If, as was often the case, particularly in the case of founders and leading benefactors, a confraternity grant from one house linked the recipient to a prayer network across the congregation then his or her death had to be proclaimed to all houses: this news could be conveyed either in a mortuary *rotulus* or a simple *breve*.[58] All monastic congregations regulated the carrying of these *breves* by an official, often styled the *portitor* or *obitor*.[59] The use of the roll was, however, exclusively confined to reporting the death of a monk or nun, was much more elaborate, and was not circulated solely to one congregation.[60] While over 300 such rolls have survived in western Europe, the *breves* were much more ephemeral: they are perhaps analogous to the secular writ, conveying information succinctly and disposed of when acted upon, perhaps by the entry of the names in a calendar or obit roll. By contrast, the *rotulus* (which was sometimes illuminated), was returned to the issuing community where it was retained.

[53] *Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, iii. 130. The symbolic importance of placing charters on the altar is discussed, with particular reference to Cluny, in Arnold Angenendt, 'How Was a Confraternity Made?', in *The Durham* Liber Vitae, pp. 216–18 and nn.

[54] *Documents illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw*, pp. 275–6 (no. 371).

[55] Among numerous studies of continental necrologies, see Dominique Iogna-Prat, 'The Dead in the Celestial Bookkeeping of the Cluniac monks around the year 1000', in Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein (eds.), *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 340–62; Joachim Wollasch, 'Les Obituaires, témoins de la vie clunisienne', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 22 (1979), pp. 139–71.

[56] See, e.g., Geoffrey Blund's request to the nuns of Clerkenwell: 'Precor quod nomen meum scriptum sit in martilegio' (*Cartulary of St Mary Clerkenwell*, ed. by William O. Hassall (Camden Society, third series, 71, 1949), p. 160 (no. 247)).

[57] See, e.g., *Regularis Concordia* p. 17 and the detailed instructions given for St Mary's York (Janet E. Burton, 'Commemoration and Memorialization in a Yorkshire Context', in *The Durham* Liber Vitae, pp. 227–8).

[58] For mortuary rolls see J. Dufour, *Receuil des rouleaux des morts (viiie siècle – vers 1536)*, (4 vols., Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles – lettres, 2005); Léopold Delisle, *Rouleaux des morts du ixe au xve siècle* (Paris: Societé de l'historire de France, 1866).

[59] See, e.g., Howard M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 259–61: Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, pp. 333–4. Some of the most detailed instructions for the procedure are found at Barnwell priory (*The Observances in Use at the Augustinian Priory of S. Giles and S. Andrew at Barnwell, Cambridgeshire*, ed. by John W. Clark (Cambridge: Macmillan and Bowes, 1897), pp. 176–7).

[60] The only lay example known to me is the extraordinary *rotulus* of Guillaume des Barres (d. 1234), one of the greatest of King Philip Augustus' military leaders, which was circulated by the Fontevraudine nunnery of Fontaine, of which he was a notable benefactor and where he was buried. But Guillaume entered the community *ad succurendum*. See Eugène Grésy, *Etude historique et paléographique sur le rouleau mortuaire de Guillaume des Barres* (Paris: Meaux, 1865).

The memorialization of benefactors through the observance of anniversaries seems to have been confined to those who had been granted fraternity. Surviving records certainly suggest that some communities were prepared to celebrate anniversaries for their benefactors more than others. Janet Burton has contrasted the relative paucity of such grants from Benedictine Selby compared with Cluniac Pontefract.[61] In this instance it may be that a potential donor recognized that in associating with a Cluniac priory he or she would be incorporated into the prayer fellowship of the whole Cluniac congregation. A similar contrast can be made between nunneries: very few are recorded, for example, at Chatteris, a substantial number for St Mary's Clerkenwell. It is possible that some communities discouraged grants for specific benefits, or that they went unrecorded.[62] Barbara Harvey has noted the comparative absence of anniversaries at Westminster abbey, apart from those splendidly appointed for royalty, and for kin of the monks, and suggested that the peculiar status of the abbey as a royal *eigenkloster* may have deterred other benefactions.[63] There may also have been institutional opposition to such forms of commemoration. The early Cistercians were certainly resistant, at least in theory, to the granting of anniversary masses and, in a move to limit the autonomy of individual houses as well as to limit the number of anniversaries, in 1201 stipulated that these required the General Chapter's consent.[64] How far such legislation was effective at a local level is, however, debateable, though early anniversaries did tend to be restricted to benefactors of high social status.

But prayer came at a cost: increasing demands for commemoration imposed a heavy liturgical, and, in some cases, financial, burden upon spiritual service providers. The promise of an anniversary for a donor or donor's nominee was frequently accompanied by a counter-provision of a pittance.[65] The monks' feast in the refectory thus served as a counterpoint to the eternal feast enjoyed by those commemorated, further symbolically linking the living and the dead, the religious and the lay. The Augustinian canons of Christ Church priory were the fortunate recipients of a salmon on the anniversaries of the deaths of the donor, Richard de Redvers, and his father, 'that thus refreshed they might more devoutly and speedily celebrate the divine service for us'.[66] Richard's son, when establishing his wife's anniversary, not only gave money for the canons' refreshment but also for the lay brothers and sisters and the maintenance

[61] Burton, 'Commemoration', p. 229.

[62] To cite one extreme case, no such requests at all are found in the charters of Premonstratensian Leiston priory.

[63] Barbara Harvey, *Westminster and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 42. Spiritual benefits are discussed, ibid., pp. 26–43.

[64] *Statuta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, ed. by Jean – Marie Canivez, 8 vols. (Louvain: Bureaux de la Revue, 1933–41), i. 265 (c.8).

[65] E. g., *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey*, ed. by Una Rees (2 vols., Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1975), i. 125–6, 171 (nos. 145, 197) See Barbara F. Harvey, 'Monastic Pittances in the Middle Ages', in Christopher Woolgar, Dale Serjeantson, and Tony Waldron (eds.), *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 215–27; David Postles, 'Pittances and Pittancers', in Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell, and Robin Frame (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England IX* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 175–86.

[66] *Charters of the Redvers Family,* p. 96 (no. 49). Fish may well have been a favourite pittance in monastic houses (Harvey, 'Monastic Pittances', p. 220).

of 40 poor people.[67] In his provision of an individual canon to say a daily mass we have the seeds of the chantry foundation.[68]

In an important study David Postles has recently argued that pittance provision allowed small donors to make small gifts to monasteries at a time when large benefactions to religious houses were declining, and that they 'represent an appropriation of the monastic liturgy by the laity in the twelfth, but more particularly the thirteenth century'.[69] While this hypothesis has some merit it must be remembered that 'small donors' were not a new phenomenon in the thirteenth century: free peasants, for example, legally entitled to grant land, had already made thousands of small grants in Lincolnshire and the Danelaw.[70] And pittances hardly represented a lay takeover of the monastic liturgy, and, as we have seen, the very concept of spiritual benefits, including pittances, was centred on reciprocity, *familiaritas*, and *fraternitas*, not a one-sided appropriation. Moreover, feasts celebrating a benefactor's anniversary were already well-established prior to the twelfth century, though initially they seem to have been established for benefactors of the highest rank and generosity.[71]

It was probably the largest institutions that suffered the most from the exponential growth of anniversaries and pittances. Their association with stupendous alms-giving, however laudable in intention, proved too much for Cluny, where the reforms of abbot Peter the Venerable cut back significantly on such provisions.[72] At Westminster, endowments originally made for alms-giving were increasingly diverted to maintain the pittances of the monks.[73] There are clear signs that the commemorative structure was also strained among the Premonstratensians, where it is noticeable that by the end of the thirteenth century obits were no longer being observed across the order but were becoming much more local in scope.[74]

There are some indications too that the performance of anniversaries and other services was seen as open to abuse. Thomas Chobham condemned the covetous practice of priests forcing penitents to celebrate masses for the dead, 'de beata virgine' and 'de spiritu sancto' and the setting of fixed rates for services, so much for an anniversary, a trental, a seventh-day mass, and even a single mass, as a consequence of which the laity were misled into thinking that masses could be bought, 'and they think that they can buy one mass and the Lord's body for a penny'.[75] At about the same time the early thirteenth-century Statutes of Westminster stipulated that no one should be forced to

[67] *Charters of the Redvers Family*, p. 138 (no. 102).
[68] Ibid., pp. 140–1 (no. 106). Cf. Ibid., p. 195 (no. 26). See also e.g. *Cartulary of Dale Abbey*, pp. 80–1 (no. 65).
[69] Postles, 'Pittances', pp. 176–7.
[70] See *Documents illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw*, *passim*; Golding, 'The Gilbertine Priories of Alvingham and Bullington', pp. 273–331.
[71] See, e.g., McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints*, pp. 96–7, 150–2. Pittances may also, as Colvin suggested, have served as an incentive to the religious 'to commemorate the deceased with added piety' (Colvin, *White Canons*, pp. 263–4). Paradoxically, anniversaries and the accompanying pittances were not always celebrated on the anniversary of death, they were 'malleable features of the refectory life' (Harvey, 'Monastic Pittances', p. 219).
[72] Wollasch, 'Les Obituaires', pp. 159–64.
[73] Harvey, *Westminster Abbey,* pp. 33–4; *Living and Dying*, pp. 27–30.
[74] Colvin, *White Canons*, pp. 260–1.
[75] Cambridge, University Library, MS 3061, f. 12ra cited in *Councils and Synods*, ii. i. 25. The standard cost of a mass for the dead in the mid-thirteenth century seems indeed to have been 1d (Wardrop, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 244).

give or bequeath anything for such services, noting that the burden of performance of anniversaries was forcing clerics to use stipendiary priests to fulfil such obligations.[76]

But it was not only the financial cost, there were also pressures on liturgical provision. At a time when monasteries were at their most populous it might have been possible for a community to supply its benefactors' demands, but as numbers fell it became increasingly difficult to maintain such services. They may also have had an impact on the disposition of liturgical space. While there were no doubt many reasons for the multiplication of monastic altars, as most famously in the chapels of Nine Altars at Durham and Fountains, one reason was the need to make room for monks saying votive and other masses for individuals. Though compared with Cluny Cistercian abbeys possessed few altars, even here the pressure from benefactors for votive masses, together with the income they brought, led to a significant increase in their number. This accelerated in the 1300s (when there were fewer monks available to say mass) in a time, as Peter Fergusson neatly expresses it, of 'more nervous spirituality'.[77]

One way to reduce the liturgical overload was to offer a general annual commemorative mass, as did the Gilbertines for the order's kin, friends, and 'all those specially received into our prayers' on the day following St Edmund's day. Close relatives of the canons were also remembered by name at the annual chapter.[78] This was also the practice among the Premonstratensians, and at Arrouaisian Christ Church, Dublin there was a similar general commemoration on 20 June.[79] At Ashridge, obits of individuals were generally observed, hardly surprisingly, on or near the anniversary of death.[80] But a general commemoration of benefactors was held twice a year, on 5 February and 6 May. Why these dates were chosen is unclear, unless it was merely that there was space in the liturgical calendar at these times.[81]

By the end of the thirteenth century there was another common route to salvation: indulgences.[82] As early as the mid-twelfth century bishops were granting indulgences to

[76] *Councils and Synods*, ii. i.30.

[77] According to the Fountains chronicler the extension was due to the increasing number of monks and the lack of space to accommodate them (*Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, ed. by John R. Walbran (Suttees Society, 42, 1863), p. 128). See Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey: Community, Architecture, Memory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 164–6.

[78] *The Gilbertine Rite*, ed. by Reginald M. Wooley (2 vols., Henry Bradshaw Society, 59, 60 (1921–22), i. 87. See Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, pp. 326–7, where the date is wrongly identified as St Edmund's eve!

[79] Colm Lennon, 'The Book of Obits of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin', in Raymond Gillespie and Raymond Refaussé (eds.), *The Medieval Manuscripts of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), p. 176. But by contrast, there was a daily commemoration at St Mary's, York (Burton, 'Commemoration', p. 227).

[80] See Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, MS EL 9 H 15, ff. 36^{v}, 37^{v}, 38^{v}, 53, 79, 88. But see Robin Fleming, 'Christchurch's Sisters and Brothers: an Edition and Discussion of Canterbury Obit Lists', in Marc A. Mayer (ed.), *The Culture of Christendom* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), p. 121 for the pertinent observation that sometimes anniversaries rather than marking the day of death might be celebrated jointly in cases where two or more benefactors were involved in a single grant.

[81] Huntington Library, MS EL 9 H 15, ff. 26^{v}, 45.

[82] For early indulgences see Nicholas Vincent, 'Some Pardoners' Tales: the Earliest English Indulgences', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th ser. 12 (2002), pp. 23–58. For indulgences for prayers for the dead see Robert N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 56–7 and 'Indulgences for Prayers for the Dead in the Diocese of Lincoln in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Journal of the Ecclesiastical History Society* 52 (2001), pp. 197–219.

monastic benefactors. The latter could thus continue to benefit from the prayers offered in the conventual church, but they now had a salvific backup. So, for example, at the dedication of the church of Godstow nunnery in 1138 Alberic the papal legate granted an indulgence to all the *largitores beneficiorum*, whose donations bishop Alexander of Lincoln had just confirmed.[83] Barbara Harvey has recently suggested that 'indulgences seem to have taken the place previously occupied by private anniversaries in the spiritual strategies of a number of monks': an observation that is equally applicable to the strategies of the lay.[84] One consequence of indulgence grants was to partially decouple prayers for the dead from both monastic church and liturgy. If the laity could obtain indulgences, particularly plenary, and remittance of purgatory through offering such prayers themselves then both the prayer and the prayed-for could, as it were, bypass the monks.

And this leads to my final point: by the end of this period there was no monastic monopoly of prayers for the laity. Though long-established houses continued to pray for their founders and benefactors till the Dissolution, for 'new' benefactors that role had largely passed to parish churches, chantry foundations, guilds and fraternities, and colleges, which might well be regarded as 'super chantries', and whose primary, though not always exclusive, function was to pray for the departed, who were normally specified and usually the kin of the founder.[85]

Chantries also had the advantage that they could be founded cheaply, and gave their founders much greater control over the commemoration they required, rather than being 'locked-in' to the monastic liturgy and observances.[86] While the higher aristocracy might continue to seek burial, and accompanying prayers, in monasteries, this was often as much through dynastic, as spiritual, piety, and many of the lesser aristocracy had long chosen burial in parish churches of which they were patrons.[87]

Charters comprise the overwhelming weight of surviving evidence for pious giving in the central Middle Ages, and these almost exclusively derive from and relate to monastic houses. It is thus likely that our understanding of pious giving and commemoration is distorted, perhaps severely so. Certainly when lay wills first become abundant in the fourteenth century it is apparent that many donations were

[83] *English Episcopal Acta I Lincoln 1067–1185*, ed. by David M. Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 22 (no. 33). See also, e.g., ibid., p. 161 (no. 258).

[84] Barbara F. Harvey, 'The Monks of Westminster and the *peculium*', in George Hardin Brown and Linda E. Voigts (eds.), *The Study of Medieval Manuscripts of England: Festschrift in Honor of Richard W. Pfaff* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 338–9. See also Robert N. Swanson, 'Letters of Confraternity and Indulgence in Late Medieval England', *Archives* 25 (2000), pp. 40–57.

[85] See, among a copious literature, Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise: Gift Giving and the Aristocracy, 1307–1485* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); Clive Burgess and Martin Heale (eds.), *The Late Medieval English College and its Context*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), and the numerous works of A. Hamilton Thompson and Clive Burgess.

[86] Katherine L. Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 303–5.

[87] See Rosenthal, *Purchase of Paradise*, ch. 5, 'Endowments to Burial Churches', pp. 81–101. Aristocratic burials in parish churches during this period still require detailed examination. For late-medieval monastic patronage see especially Claire Cross, 'Monasticism and Society in the Diocese of York, 1520–1540', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 38 (1988), pp. 131–45; Benjamin Thompson, 'Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser. 4 (1994), pp. 103–25; Karen Stöber, *Late Medieval Monasteries and their Patrons, England and Wales, c. 1300–1540* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007).

being directed, and liturgical commemoration sought, outside the monastic precinct. The frequent depictions of donors in surviving stained glass windows of both churches and cathedrals (and, of course, the vast majority of such windows are now lost), often with an inscription asking for prayers, is also indicative.[88] Was this a new development, or the continuation of old patterns? And now, rather than detailing in charters the prayers they wished to receive, the laity proclaimed their expectations on their tombs, exhorting the viewer to intercede for them, and in so doing gain purgatorial remission for both, as did Matilda de Edefen, whose c. 1300 memorial in Edwyn Ralph church recorded such remission granted by the bishops of Hereford and Worcester to all who said an *ave* and a *pater* for her, or Robert de Bures, whose monumental brass of c. 1331 states (in French, the language of the aristocratic laity, not Latin) that whoever will pray for his soul will receive 40 days of pardon.[89]

In March 1536 Thomas, lord de la Warr wrote to Thomas Cromwell, pleading that Boxgrove priory be spared from dissolution. He was, he said, its founder; here many of his ancestors and his mother-in-law were buried, and he himself had made a burial chapel there (which still survives).[90] But Thomas was not the founder. He had inherited the patronage through marriage: nor was his wife a descendant of the first twelfth-century founders. Just as the priory continued to pray for all its benefactors, Thomas had also inherited and honoured patronal responsibilities. That reciprocal relationship between religious and laity, which has been one of this paper's themes, survived. Nevertheless, he recognized contemporary political realities, and, like the vast majority of his social contemporaries, was not going to resist. If 'his' priory were not spared, then could it be transformed into a chantry college of priests instead? Thomas was not to know that a few years later chantries would follow monasteries into oblivion. In this time of unprecedented upheaval, intercessions were more important than the institution that offered them. Prayers mattered.

[88] See, for example, the depiction of Robert Skelton holding a window in a mid-fourteenth century window at St Denys church, York, asking prayers for himself and his family (*Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200 – 1400*, eds. by Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), pp. 292–3. Langland's condemned the practice of paying for a commemorative window in a friary 'so that everyone shall see I am a sister to your house' (cited in ibid., p. 30).

[89] Alan Brooks and Nikalaus Pevsner, *Herefordshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 226; *Age of Chivalry*, p. 294.

[90] *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, ix. no. 552.

18

Universities: Friend or Foe?

Alexander Murray

In 1112 the 22-year-old youth later known as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux gave up a promising school career to join the struggling monastic community at Cîteaux, of whose form of monasticism he became the leading champion. By the time he died in 1153 it had bespattered Europe with hundreds of Cistercian houses and provided the Church with scores of bishops, including one pope Eugenius III (1145–53). He once told Bernard it was said that he, Bernard, rather than the pope, ruled the Church.

All this is well known to Bernard scholars, known all the better, let it be said, for Sister Benedicta Ward's welcome new translation of *The Great Beginning of Cîteaux*,[1] the second-generation account of Cistercian origins. But it is just one aspect of the early Cistercians I wish to dwell on at this point: its character as a revolt from schooling. Bernard's attitude to learning, his own or that of others, is too subtle to be conveyed in a short summary. He had had a good education, never forgot his classical Latin or his rhetorical skills. He could hold all kinds of audience spellbound; and he cast enough of an eye on the schools of Paris, despite his well-known aspersions on some of its masters and most of its students, to give opportune encouragement to theologians he trusted. But none of this hides his general mistrust of academe. Writing of the 12 kinds of pride, he put *curiositas* first, and gave it almost more space than all the rest.[2] The Cistercian monastery should be for him a *schola caritatis*, a term deliberately distinguishing it from other schools. Its purpose was to teach its pupils to love God, and love him 'without measure'.[3]

This attitude was not Bernard's alone. Much of the early recruitment to the Cistercians was from scholars. A *Past and Present* article in 1974 contrasted the recruitment and spirituality of religious orders in the tenth and the thirteenth centuries respectively, arguing that in the earlier period it was revulsion from violence, in the later, from money-mindedness, which conspicuously drove conversion to a religious

[1] The Great Beginning of Cîteaux. A Narrative of the Beginning of the Cistercian Order; The Exordium Magnum of Conrad of Eberbach, trans. B. Ward and P. Savage., and ed. E. Rozanne Elder, Cistercian Fathers Series, no. 72 (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012).

[2] E. Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of St Bernard*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (London & New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940, r.p. 1955), pp. 155–7.

[3] *De diligendo Deo,* i, 1; *cf*. Gilson, *Mystical Theology*, pp. 33 and 221 n. 25. *Schola caritatis*: ibid., pp. 60–84.

order.[4] There is half a case, at least, for fitting Cistercian monasticism in between, as driven by a revulsion from schools. All such schemes exaggerate. This one would have to remember that violence was still in business in the twelfth century, and *milites* becoming Cistercians in recoil from it; but also, that plenty of Cistercian entrants were from older kinds of religious order, so they at least arrived well educated, if not from 'schools' pure and simple (all of which needs pondering in connection with the Cistercian monk-*conversus* distinction). But the element from simple 'schools' is still conspicuous.

This may not always jump out from the sources. But the perfunctory accounts given by some biographers for the beginning of a monk's career or, by others, for the end of a scholar's, and *obiter dicta* in sources without obvious connection to the subject, do reveal it. Stephen Harding had left his native Dorset for *Scotia* and then Paris, *studiorum causa*, before becoming a monk.[5] Two pre-eminent Paris philosopher-theologians, Alan of Lille and Peter Cantor, are known to have died as Cistercians. Otto of Freising was a chronicler, we all know. A marginal note in one early manuscript suggests contemporaries remembered him otherwise: as a former top-scholar from Paris who had left to become a Cistercian, taking 15 fellow students with him; and they also knew that later, in 1143, as bishop, Otto had helped himself to another posse of Paris scholars to populate his new Cistercian foundation at Heiligenkreuz.[6] The Cistercian gossip of Caesarius of Heisterbach reveals, as if by accident and as nothing to be surprised about, that this or that monk had been a Paris student or a schoolmaster.[7]

More to the point, the trend was not just Cistercian. Before the 'twelfth-century renaissance' had begun, St Bruno had given up his post as *scholasticus* of Rheims, where he had taught for some 30 years in a school still aglow with the reputation of Gerbert, to start the Carthusian order in 1084. I shall come back to him at the end of this paper, for a purpose to be revealed then. But in Bernard's century, further throwaway references tell us that Robert of Arbrissel had left home in Brittany to seek *litterarum disciplinam* in Paris, before returning halfway home to found Fontevrault,[8] and, at the 'school' end, that Thierry of Chartres, as famous a theologian-philosopher in his time as were Alan of Lille and Peter Cantor later, had died as a monk (though we do not know where).[9] A specially informative case, because he wrote about it, is that of Alexander Nequam. Otherwise remembered as an Oxford scholar and author of a *De natura rerum*, Nequam left unpublished sermons and commentaries which reveal the Oxford master as long wrestling with a monastic call, eventually answered when he joined the Augustinians at Cirencester. As a master, he had told pupils that what

[4] Barbara H. Rosenwein and Lester K. Little, 'Social meaning in the monastic and mendicant spiritualities', *Past and Present*, 63 (1974), pp. 4–32.

[5] H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, new edn by. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), vol. 1, p. 274, n. 3.

[6] The note is printed in *Ottonis . . . Frisingensis chronica,* ed. A. Hofmeister. Hanover-Leipzig, 1912, pp. 3–4; *cf.* R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, vol. 2: *The Heroic Age* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 84–5.

[7] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, bk i, c. 23; ed. J. Strange (Cologne, 1851), vol. i, p. 46; and ibid., bk x, c. 64; ed. Strange, vol. ii, p. 260.

[8] Rashdall, *Universities,* vol. 1, p. 274 n. 4.

[9] Southern, *Scholastic Humanism,* vol. 2, pp. 87–8.

he *taught* the monks *did*.[10] In retrospect, from Cirencester, commenting on the psalm (136/7) where the Jews lament their exile in Babylon, Nequam compared their plight to that of poor teachers like his former self (*nos pusillos*), left to do the teaching when the 'great men' have gone off to the 'sweetness of the cloister'.[11] (Read 'Leverhulme Fellowship'?)

Nequam there implies, without stating or giving names, that these 'great men' were other scholars. Even without names, we have other such indirect evidence. Another lesson Sister Benedicta has taught us is to look at the implications of miracles. Here is one. William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum* told of two learnt clerks of Nantes around 1050 who promised each other that whichever died first would return to inform the other of his fate. One duly died, and told the other he was in flames, and the survivor became a monk.[12] A. E. Schönbach wrote a long paper on this miracle, whose career went back at least to Gregory the Great.[13] Details varied in different versions. It had begun as the story of two secular clerks rather than scholars. The Malmesbury version added 'letters': the age of the schools was dawning, and a story which had begun as a monastic stick to beat secular clergy was being adjusted for beating scholars. There were copies of William's *Gesta regum* in Clairvaux, and the two-companions miracle was to have a lively Cistercian career. Some versions emphasized the scholar's guilt by making his subject necromancy, studied in Toledo.[14] But the story went everywhere. Jacques de Vitry, ex-Paris scholar, told it around 1200, underlining the ghost's academic past by giving him a paper hat covered with *curiositates*. The survivor became a Cistercian. Jacques claimed actually to have seen the hole made in the survivor's hand by the drop of sweat, hot from torment, which the ghost had dropped on it.[15] Odo of Cheriton († *c.* 1246) named the convert as Serlo of Wilton († 1181), whom we know from elsewhere to have dropped a literary career to enter a Cluniac monastery, going on to a Cistercian one. The Dominican Stephen of Bourbon (†*c*. 1261) said he had *heard* the story (unlike Caesarius, who said he had *read* it). It must have been by hearing that it got into *The Golden Legend* because the name 'Serlo' became 'Silo'. The story was hardy enough, when the time came, to attach itself to the Renaissance Platonist Marsilio Ficino, who appeared after his death to convert a friend from too much reading.

But that takes us well beyond the twelfth century, when the schools and Cistercians were on the rise, one leaking manpower to the other. Let us move more gradually, and see how all this changed. In 1336, another Cistercian pope, Benedict XII (1334–42), decreed that every monastery should send at least one monk in every twenty to study at university. Over the next 3 years Benedict added more regulations about monastic

[10] R. W. Hunt, *The Schools and the Cloister. The Life and Writings of Alexander Nequam,* ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 87.

[11] Ibid., p. 7.

[12] *Gesta regum anglorum* i, bk iii, c. 237; eds. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom. 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998 & 1999), vol. 1, pp. 440–5; comment and further references in vol. 2, p. 228.

[13] 'Studien zur Erzählungsliteratur des Mittelalters, I: Die Reuner Relationen'. *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Kl., 138 (1898), pt v, pp. 1–120, esp. 25–33.

[14] Caesarius, *Dialogus* (as in n. 7), bk i, c. 23; vol. 1, pp. 39–40. The MS Reun version: Schönbach, 'Reuner Relationen', pp. 41–3. Unusually for Caesarius he says he *read* the story.

[15] Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla,* ed. T. Crane. Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 26 (London: Folk-Lore Society, 1890), no. 31, pp. 12–13.

participation in universities.[16] In fact, Benedict was only formalizing a monastic volte-face which had begun earlier, around 1200. Among contemplative orders, paradoxically, it was the Cistercians who had led the way. Around 1233 Stephen of Lexington, abbot of Cîteaux, had regretted that no academically qualified theologian had entered his order and in 1247 had founded a Cistercian student-house in Paris, which became known as the Bernardines (Benedict XII was an *alumnus*).[17] The paradox is only apparent. 'Black' Benedictines had been learnt for so many centuries that they were slow to see that they might have to be importers rather than exporters, and their ancient constitution, unlike the new Cistercian one, also made them less nimble in responding to circumstances.

The circumstances in question were the growing conglomerations of increasingly expert scholars for whom a new name had to be found, and around 1200 found it in the hitherto bafflingly unspecific word 'university'. I shall deal mainly with Paris, much of the time also with Oxford, with no aspersion on the others, because these were the main centres concerned. From soon after Stephen of Lexington's 1247 initiative, Paris and Oxford were to fill up with houses for monks to study there. The houses were usually pioneered by one monastery but in due course financed and supervised by the order as a whole. It had economies of scale to pay for students, and used them. Benedict XII's 'one in twenty' was a minimum. Graduates in Norwich, a not-untypical big English Benedictine monastery, have been reckoned in the fifteenth century to have numbered one in seven.[18] The change had its effect in architecture. By 1500 the appearance of Oxford – more so than Paris, with its more numerous alternative sites – has been described by R. B. Dobson, author of the relevant chapter in the university's official history, as 'more profoundly shaped by its religious houses than by any other institutional buildings'.[19] Enthusiasts for Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard* will recall the hero's identical impression as his carriage descends into early nineteenth-century Palermo (which incidentally also had ten *conventi*, all huge). If the comparison shocks us, it is a reminder of Oxford's Reformation upheaval, which has left us, of its early monastic houses, little more than a few names like the bus station (Gloucester Green, after the monks' college) or – thanks to an opportune suggestion by Sir Richard Southern, then President of St John's, heir to the Cistercian college – 'St Bernard's Road'.

What explains this change? Let me start by bringing on stage the orders I have kept off it until now: the 'mendicants' or friars. I must content myself here with saying just three things about them. The first is, yes, that friars were undoubtedly major agents in changing monastic attitudes to learning. The Dominicans were Preachers, so naturally came first, settling in Paris in 1217, in Bologna in 1219, in Oxford in 1221, and in following years in other study centres. But the Franciscans were close behind, whatever

[16] Rashdall, *Universities,* vol. 1, p. 554.
[17] Ibid., p. 506.
[18] J. Greatrix 'Monk Students from Norwich Cathedral Priory at Oxford and Cambridge, *c* 1200–1530', *English Historical Review* 106 (1991), pp. 555–83; esp. 559–64.
[19] R. B. Dobson, 'The religious orders, 1370–1540', in *The History of the University of Oxford,* ed. T. H. Aston; vol. 2: *Late Medieval Oxford,* eds. J. I. Catto and T. A. R. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 539–79, esp. p. 541.

the Poverello's early ideals. They settled in Paris in 1219, Oxford in 1224, and, again, in other *studia* not long afterwards. Other, smaller friar-orders followed this example as they appeared, and indeed risked *dis*appearing if they did not. The latest historian of the Humiliati has suggested that their failure to include graduates may help account for their failure.[20]

The swift growth of the friars indicates that their compound of academic and religious ideals hit a contemporary need, hitherto ill-identified. Some recruits to the friars were already university masters, like Robert Bacon at Oxford, who brought his teaching post with him to the Dominicans (causing the university authorities to raise the academic bar for would-be imitators).[21] Paris had similar conversions, if not all as dramatic as that of Alexander of Hales, who donned a Franciscan habit halfway through a lecture. The contemplative orders, meanwhile, found they were haemorrhaging young monks into the friars. In 1233 the Cîteaux General Chapter had to declare such deserters to be 'apostates', a sure sign that it was happening, and almost as sure that it would go on – which we anyway know it did, from further complaints in 1244.[22] This loss of young blood was surely one stimulus for the founding of monastic colonies in universities.

One, only. There were indubitably others. Matthew Paris spread the view that the monks entered universities because they were jealous at seeing their pre-eminence challenged by the friars. This explanation has often been repeated.[23] But there were more serious motives. Since I shall come later to theology, the subject studied by at least nine-tenths of all scholar-religious and by almost all the friars, to get that 'jealousy' theory out of the way let me say just two words on canon law, the subject of the other tenth or less. An exquisitely revealing story retold in Sir Richard Southern's *Scholastic Humanism* relates how Battle Abbey, near Hastings, after a century of cosy protection by the Norman dynasty which had founded it, had its autonomy challenged by a tough new dynasty which had not, and suddenly realized that it needed a canon lawyer. The abbey chronicle tells how the abbot bemoaned his failure to allow any of his monks to be sent to study canon law. Too late. Or too late for Battle. But the lesson was there for other monasteries, long before friars had been heard of.[24]

That is my first remark about friars. The second is a confession. When honoured by the invitation to contribute to this volume I picked on my title, not just because the question has been a lifelong preoccupation, but because I had just finished reading an arresting new book on this topic. It is called *The Poor and the Perfect*, by the young Turkish-born scholar Neslihan Şenocak,[25] and deals with the Franciscans' adoption

[20] F. Andrews, *The Early Humiliati* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 224.

[21] M. W. Sheehan, 'The religious orders, 1220–1370', in *The History of the University of Oxford* (as in n. 19), vol. 1: *The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. J. I. Catto (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 193–225, esp. pp. 197–8.

[22] Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect*, see note 25 below, pp. 181–2, with an example from 1233 of similar 'haemorrhage' to the Franciscans from an Augustinian priory.

[23] Sheehan, 'The religious orders', pp. 213–4; a view repeated by J. Greatrix. 'Monk Students' (as in n. 18), p. 55.

[24] Southern, *Scholastic Humanism* (as in n. 6), vol. 1: *Foundations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 171–3.

[25] *The Poor and the Perfect. The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209–1310* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2012).

of university learning into their programme, up to 1310. We all know how St Francis began by rejecting all secular motivations, including any but elementary learning. (The poverty ideal applied also to books). Dr Şenocak shows how swiftly Francis' professed followers changed this. The study of theology, at university level or (more locally) at a level to which a university set the ideal, became integral to the order's programme. Haimo of Faversham, who had joined the order 2 years before Francis' death, was already a Paris theology graduate, and was one, if only one, instigator of the change, becoming minister general of the order in 1240.

Dr Şenocak sees this change as a falling-away, insufficiently excused by the parishes' need for theologically trained pastors, because, as she sees it, Franciscan graduates showed little sign of meeting this need. I shall return to that; but only after adding a third remark about friars. Dr Şenocak gives my question clear focus by concentrating on a single religious order. But actually, it applied in greater or lesser measure to all religious orders. We tend to over-distinguish medieval religious orders, between the mendicant orders themselves and between them and the rest. Our primary sources encourage this, and their authors' sense of group-identity spills into modern books written about them, and even more, necessarily, into undergraduate weekly essays. But institutions do not develop like this. The founder's portrait stays on the wall, often literally. But a society that tolerates and feeds institutions likes those that seem to serve a similar purpose and to do so in roughly the same way – like modern universities. So medieval historians of religious orders must be on their guard.[26]

The convergence between Dominicans and Franciscans has been an axiom of their history since even before Dante paired them in Canto XI of *Paradiso*. We can argue about details and degrees of the convergence, but no scholar familiar with the records of, for instance, early fourteenth-century inquisitions or canonization processes will see much difference between the Dominican or Franciscan judges who conducted them. Nor, and this is my point here, will the same scholar see much difference between either of those mendicant judges and Jacques Fournier (the future Benedict XII), who headed the Montaillou inquisition as a Cistercian; and, in doing so, was in any case only going back to the task done by Cistercians before Dominicans were invented to take it off them. Meanwhile – or almost meanwhile, the example I am thinking of is mid-thirteenth century – we find an archbishop of Pisa recommending the city's Franciscan convent to the citizens not for its poverty (the contrary: its shabbiness is a disgrace to the city) but because the friars' prayers have saved many a Pisan, unbeknown, from shipwreck or other disaster[27] – according to our ABCs the function of Cistercians or other Benedictines. Dozens more examples could be arrayed beside those.

Their joint message is that the two-way pull, of academic education versus a disciplined life of prayer, was a question for every religious order, and doubly so once European universities were up and running. All that the Dominicans had done was to

[26] Essentially the same point in H. Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (2nd edn, Hildesheim: Olms, 1961), pp. 5–8.

[27] This is documented in my 'Archbishop and mendicants in thirteenth-century Pisa', in K. Elm (ed.), *Stellung und Wirksamkeit der Bettelorden in der städtischen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1981), pp. 19–76, on pp. 59–61, *cf.* also pp. 67–9. The passages can now be found in the critical edition of Visconti's sermons by N. Bériou (Rome: École française de Rome, 2001).

open a path and thereby identify a need felt consciously or otherwise by other orders; so in this respect, and in the degree each found suitable to itself, they 'converged' on the Dominicans. All orders had to find a way of regular life which combined prayer with effective academic study, constantly weighing their priorities and meeting new dangers.

Because their problem was innate in Christianity – which relies on Scripture, that is, writing – it was as old as the Church. To find out how to pray or who to pray to you must either learn to read or put yourself in the hands of those who can. This is why early monasteries, in a world without schools, had had to have their own schools – the kind of school where Bede learnt his excellent Latin. Word naturally got around, and, like English nineteenth-century Sunday schools, monastic schools attracted outsiders who wanted the knowledge but not the obligation. That was not necessarily a scandal. Early eleventh-century Bec, for instance, became a kind of 'Eton' for the young Norman barons who were later to govern England, all the better for their education.[28] External teaching nevertheless endangered the monastery's prime purpose, which was why reformers, notably the Cluniacs, banned it. That allowed the liturgy in Cluny to grow, and grow, until it filled almost the whole day. Peter Damian approved, when he visited. The young Anselm, who had thought of joining, did not. He wanted to *think*, and went off to the more study-friendly Bec.[29]

This is the ambivalent inheritance which held sway when the *non*-monastic schools began to proliferate in the twelfth century, raising their rank and ambitions gradually until they metamorphosed (not much of metamorphosis at first, except in name) into 'universities'. Bishops had wanted non-monastic schools to be run by cathedrals, dotted around in dioceses. But with a handful of well-known exceptions it was not in cathedral schools that the fruitful explosion happened. Market forces, more than direction from above, dictated otherwise. What had drawn the Stephen Hardings and Robert of Arbrissels to leave home was the magnetism of brilliant masters, and the places that came to matter were the ones which could attract and concentrate these. As with modern supermarkets, alas, economies of scale have advantages, and in the twelfth century meant cheaper books, lodgings, etc., and simultaneously assured newcomers that the big fish really were that, not middling fish in small ponds.

Whence Paris and Oxford. Both had 'grey' development space, and both were near enough to their kings – in Paris, at work, in Oxford, hunting at Woodstock – to procure and promise favours. Brilliant masters went there, and drew in students from smaller institutions. Their magnetism is revealed in the history of early colleges, because these were founded to lodge students from far away. Oxford began looking unique, for England, around 1200. The best monastic-cum-cathedral school in England was then Durham. But precisely because it was so good, it saw that the future for its best students was in Oxford; and the initiative for the founding of all four earliest colleges in Oxford can be traced at some point to Durham. The origin of the Paris college for

[28] Sally N. Vaughn, 'Lanfranc, Anselm and the School of Bec: In Search of the Students of Bec', in M. A. Meyer (ed.), *The Culture of Christendom. Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1993), pp. 155–81.

[29] The two reactions, with background: D. M. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England, 943–1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), pp. 149–50.

theologians, the Sorbonne, tells the same story. Its founder, himself a provincial who had made good in Paris, got long-term financing of students from bishoprics ranged across Flanders and northern France – except Normandy, whose betwixt-and-between character as half-English got it a college of its own (the Collège du Trésorier).[30]

It was the same magnetism which drew the religious orders to Paris and Oxford. Their difference, from schools not attached to religious orders, was that their rules enshrined the special priorities which had made their founders found them in the first place. Medieval universities did not, themselves, share these priorities. They pretended to be ecclesiastical in so far as they thought it in their interest to be ecclesiastical, and fooled enough of the people for enough of the time to oblige those they did not fool – like secular judges, who might have hanged criminal students but for benefit of clergy – to accept it with good or bad grace. The illusion was easier to maintain because of churchmen's wishful thinking. This has persuaded some incautious modern scholars to think theology in the Middle Ages was the Queen of the Sciences. Of course it is, and was, in theory. But it was not so in practice. By the late-thirteenth century, in both Paris and Oxford, under a maze of shifting titles and disguises, moulded by circumstances peculiar to each place, university authority lay with the Masters of Arts.[31] Like many old Latin terms 'arts' concealed more than it revealed, and still does, staving off awkward questions.[32] The Liberal Arts had once been meant as a first-degree subject, a stepping stone to higher study, but by the end of the thirteenth century most arts students did not go on to a higher degree, and since they far outnumbered theology students – figures from Paris in 1348 suggest a ratio of 16:1 – their numbers and loud voices secured their constitutional headship of the university.[33] So, politically, the arts were the queen of the sciences. Economically, theology did just as badly. The economic chiefs were the so-called *scientiae lucrativae*, medicine and law; and since theology was the only other postgraduate degree, that implied that theology was not lucrative. That is why charitable founders, caring for the Church at large, gave theology priority.

At the risk of ramming this point too hard – and perhaps for readers who do not need it rammed – let a word be said about the content of the arts course. The first works of Aristotle known in Latin were on the Liberal Art of logic. As more works by Aristotle, and his commentators, arrived, there was no room for them at any inn except in the arts, which they gradually took over. Well before 1300, the Paris arts faculty was often called *facultas artium sive philosophiae*, whose *philosophiae* part had nothing at all to do with stepping stones. It was partly in reaction to this that theologians needed to insist that theology was queen. To concentrate for a moment on Paris, the mecca of theologians, how fragile a control they had on the university as a whole is illustrated best by the condemnations of 1277. The bishop of Paris was well aware of the limits of his authority in the university, and probably did not wish to think about it. But in 1277

[30] I argue a Durham initiative for Balliol, Merton, and University College in my '1249', *University College Record*, xii, no. 4 (Oxford: University College, 2000), pp. 52–73, with references also to literature on the Sorbonne and the Normans' *College du Trésorier*. On Oxford's 'Durham' college, which became Trinity: Sheehan, 'The religious orders', p. 194.

[31] Rashdall, *Universities,* vol. 1, pp. 298–334; vol. 3, pp. 39–60.

[32] See Hunt, *Nequam* (as in n. 10), pp. 44–5, on the *trompe l'oeil* in the term.

[33] 16:1: H. Denifle, *Die Entstehung der Universitäten im Mittelalter bis 1400* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 123–4; *cf.* Rashdall, *Universities*, vol. 1, pp. 330–1.

he was prodded by a philosophically minded pope who did know, having studied medicine there. The result was that renowned list of 219 condemned 'propositions', allegedly taught around Paris. Their quantity and heterogeneity bear witness more to the weakness than to the strength of their compiler – as with Pius IX's 1864 'syllabus of errors'.[34] The propositions included:

> The teachings of theologians are based on fables
> That prayer is to no purpose.[35]

There was plenty more on these lines.[36]

None of this made an ideal milieu into which to send young monks – or for that matter friars (as we shall see), though they had asked for it. The milieu in Paris is well exemplified in John of Jandun's *In praise of Paris*, written in 1323. The author was a well-established Regent Master of Arts, and Head of Paris' College of Navarre. In praising Paris he naturally gave a high place to its famous university, and to the glories of his own faculty – the *facultas artium, quin imo philosophiae.* Then he explained how, in the 'exceptionally quiet street called the Sorbonne, and many religious convents', visitors could admire the wranglings of theologians. John's praise of them barely conceals his irony, and he finishes:

> What use or profit such mental gymnastics are to Catholic religion, God knows.[37]

Even as he wrote, a colleague of John's who was equally prominent in the university – he had done his turn as head of the arts faculty and hence of the university – was at work at his desk, probably in that same *vico quietissimo nominato Sorbone*, on what was to become the most notorious anti-clerical tract of the Middle Ages. Marsilius finished *Defensor pacis* on 24 June 1324. For well over a year no one took any notice. But John and Marsilius knew that if people did notice, it might become too late to do anything about it (I shall mention the theologians' 'atom bomb' in a moment). So early (no doubt) one day in 1326 they escaped to Munich into the open arms of Ludwig of Bavaria, the papacy's arch-enemy.[38]

I only tell that story because it drives home the theological dangers for religious who came to study in universities. Of course not all universities were the same. The internal and external balances of power would change in each one, according to circumstance. One former Paris theology graduate, returning from far away in 1220,

[34] In H. Denifle and A. Chatelain, *Chartularium universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1889–97), vol, 1, §473, pp. 543–78. Entry to the extensive literature: J. Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy* (London-New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 266–9.

[35] Ibid., p. 552 (§152): 'Quod sermones theologi fundati sunt in fabulis'; p. 553 (§180): 'Quod non est orandum.'

[36] E.g. §16 (p. 544), §§152–4 (p. 552), §§174–5, §§178–80, §183 (p. 553).

[37] *De laudibus Parisius*, i, c. 2; eds. A. J. V. Le Roux de Lincy and L. M. Tisserand, *Paris et ses historiens aux xiv et xiv siècles* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1867), pp. 22–78, p. 40: 'Quid autem utilitatis et qualiter religioni catholice conferat tale gimnasium, Deus novit'. Background: L. Schmugge, *Johannes von Jandun (1285/89–1328)* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1966), p. 24.

[38] Schmugge, *Johannes von Jandun*, pp. 26–30; G. de Lagarde, *La naissance de l'esprit laïque au déclin du moyen âge,* vol. 3 (2nd edn, Louvain-Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1970), pp. 4–5. 'In scientia satis famosi': *Continuatio chronici Guillelmi de Nangis,* year 1326, in L. D'Achery, *Spicilegium,* vol. 3 (Paris, 1723), p. 85.

found that a city which in his student days had been a den of iniquity (in the 1180s) was now a paradise.[39] Oxford had its own ways of changing. The great scholar-bishop Robert Grosseteste had kicked it off. After his death in 1254 Oxford's relation to its bishop, 120 miles away in Lincoln, sank towards zero, with all sorts of constitutional and doctrinal consequences (the latter including Wyclif).

In neither university was theology without its friends or its weapons. It usually had the respect of kings, from motives usually high-minded but not always. And in France, partly for that reason (not in England: English liberties did not allow it) theologians always had their 'atom bomb', seldom used but devastating when it was. How seldom, and how devastating, was learnt rather dramatically by a prévôt of Paris in 1381. He had been appointed to Paris for his zero-tolerance policy, and became popular for its effectiveness. Unfortunately for him he directed it with special venom – in this not unlike that 'hanging judge' I mentioned earlier – against scholars, of all ages and faculties, encouraging his police to bully them on any pretext. Students and masters of all faculties suffered this for more than a year. But after a particularly painful *fracas*, they approached the theologians, or rather, a particular theologian, a Dominican, who obliged. Their enemy's womanizing and careless language had given university spies ample food for an inquisition, and after a drama which cries out, from its confinement in the Paris cartulary, to be turned into a television drama, the prévôt ended by fleeing for his life, by night and on foot, from a city he had entered as its 'strong man'.[40] Nota bene: theology had, in that episode, been coming to the defence of the whole university.

But most of the time the theologians just worked away in their *quietissimo vico*. That should have given no worries for monastic authorities. But there were still some. John of Jandun's very expression, *quietissimo vico,* implies that most of Paris was noisy, which we know it was anyway. No wonder the monks had been slow to come. But it was not just noise; it was – dare I say it? – company. It is both the glory and the drawback of educational institutions that they involve the young, whose moral imperfections, if any, have their own stamp, and are a bad model for young religious. Urban geography suggests that when monastic colleges did come, they preferred sites away from the city centre: open fields lay between Oxford and its monastic colleges, and in Paris, the Augustinians and Bernardines were as near the city wall as they could be without being outside it.

Monks therefore tried to be in the university but not of it. And here was the contradiction. The university's advantages of scale were there for study. The orders' advantages of scale were there for paying for it. But, being large, they paid from a distance, which made supervision difficult. What trustee of an educational trust will deny sympathy to a thirteenth-century abbot of Gloucester who hears, too late to do much about it, that the students of Gloucester college have habitually been crossing those open fields to visit bad parts and bad company in Oxford?[41] That was in spare

[39] Jacques de Vitry, *Historia occidentalis*, c. 7; ed. J. F. Hinnebusch (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1972), pp. 90–3.

[40] The story is reconstructed in my 'Beware of universities. A cautionary tale from Paris, 1380–81', in S. Hayes (ed.), *Medieval Paradigms. Essays in Honor of Jeremy de Quesney Adams* (New York-London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 29–54.

[41] Sheehan, 'The religious orders' (as in n. 21), p. 217.

time. In work time the contradiction was more painful. If monks were really to go to the best classes they had to rub shoulders there with non-monks. In 1336 (following another initiative of Benedict XII) the English Benedictines decreed that their Oxford students were never to share classes with non-monastic students[42] – meaning, again, that they had been doing so. We are not told if the ban held.

A degree of *apartheid* might be possible for theology students, the kind mostly in question. They were all graduates, and the Sorbonne, for example, concentrated them in one place. But theology did not make its students angels, and there were still dangers. Hovering in the background was the *Frauenfrage*, a headache of St Dominic's later years: his experience was that well-born and high-minded young men fall head over heels for well-born and high-minded young women; so celibacy required that they be kept apart.[43] One of history's many unpaid debts to Margaret of Provence, Saint Louis' queen, is that she put her hand on his sleeve when he was planning to found a nunnery where he actually put the Sorbonne.[44] Even without that distraction the 'extremely quiet' Sorbonne had to deal with a modest share of noisy offences, like making a hubbub during grace at meals, or 'being very drunk'.[45] And in 1495 the Cistercian General Chapter had to ban its student-monks in Paris from having initiation rituals – yet another proof that contagion could spread from the rest of the university, where these riotous rituals were universal.[46] Another slight problem was food. Any monastic house in a city found it irresistibly convenient to import kitchen and other staff from outside. Surely not always, but sometimes, they brought non-monastic manners and vocabulary uncomfortably near to trainee-theologians; this, too, we learn from official grumbles on the subject.[47]

For arts students, tackling the stepping stones to higher knowledge, *apartheid* was effectively impossible. They had to learn their Latin along with others. We learn this from the recollections of one of them, looking back in 1327 on a boyhood among the Franciscans in Paris in the 1270s. His parents had 'given' him to the Franciscans at the age of 14, and he blushed deeply to recall how he had not merely joined, but excelled in, the vices common in student milieu.[48] Lofty idealism and liturgical duties were not a guaranteed protection. The earliest ever college in Paris or Oxford was Paris' *Collège des Dix-huit*, founded in 1180 as an offshoot of the city poorhouse, whose 'eighteen' *clerici-scholares* had to earn their keep by liturgical duties on a near-monastic scale, for the dead whose corpses arrived almost daily from the poorhouse. The first glimpse we have of these scholars is their being punished for public disorder.[49] Both Paris and Oxford bubble with examples. Loyal Oxonians who hesitate to believe it will find bad

[42] Rashdall, *Universities*, vol. 1, p. 275 n. 4.
[43] Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen* (as in n. 26), pp. 284–312.
[44] P. Glorieux, 'Les origines du Collège de Sorbon'. in A. L. Gabriel and J. N. Garvin (eds.), *Texts and Studies in the History of Medieval Education*, no. 8 (Notre-Dame, Indiana: Medieval Institute of the University of Note Dame, 1959), pp. 11–12.
[45] Rashdall, *Universities,* vol. 3, pp. 367–70.
[46] Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 384, n. 2.
[47] Dobson, 'The religious orders' (as in n. 19), p. 565.
[48] Ubertino da Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixae* (Venice, 1485; r.p. Turin, 1961), p. 1.
[49] J. M. Reitzel, 'The founding of the earliest secular colleges with the universities of Paris and Oxford'. DPhil thesis, Brown University, 1971, p. 42. 'Earliest colleges': R. Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 2–17.

behaviour by Oxford students – and dons, for that matter – amply documented in W. A. Pantin's *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives*.[50]

Discipline was one problem. A more radical, long-term one was how to organize time: how much for prayer, how much for study? The two occupations are distinct, but in practical terms have much in common. Both seem to be peculiar to *homo sapiens*, and both envisage effects not instantly obvious to the senses – unlike fighting or eating (in both respects). Prayer and study have both, consequently, been sometimes dismissed as useless by people who find such non-obvious effects hard to conceive. Regarding study in the Middle Ages, J. W. Thompson's *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages*, for instance, parades many early medieval noblemen – some not-so-early – contemptuous of the idea of having their children taught to read (Robert of Normandy, the Conqueror's son, started learning to read but found it 'nauseous').[51] As to prayer, I have just reported a voice from Paris on its uselessness; and similar views have again been collected by medievalists on the lookout for them.[52]

Study and prayer have therefore often flourished in institutions whose discipline can coax frail human wills into habits challenging to their nature. To do so, they allot time, in ratios reflecting the relative values they attach to the two activities. In the sources we have, this ratio appears to change over the 'long twelfth century'. For instance, one favoured index of sanctity in an eleventh-century saint's *Life* would be a continuous recitation of psalms: a hermit-saint, or any saint when on his own, is clearly a saint if he says all 150 psalms daily.[53] The same effect could be achieved communally by filling the day with liturgy, as we saw at Cluny. Anselm, whom it displeased, marks the dawn of the 'twelfth-century renaissance'. The Dominicans mark its full day. Their constitution allowed some dispensation from liturgy for friars engaged in study: 'lest they be easily taken away from or impeded in their studies by the office or anything else'.[54] *Officium vel aliud*: St Benedict might have frowned at that phrase. But Dominicans saw their duty as preaching. It was not just law; it was how they felt. A Dominican preaching in a country church found it slightly offensive that a peasant woman should continue praying instead of listening to his sermon.[55] Franciscans took similar measures. They excused the studious from some liturgy: the *lector* of a convent automatically from compline and sometimes from more, especially if the convent was in a *studium*.[56] By 1277 the message had got through to the Benedictines, anxious about the decline

[50] Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

[51] J. W. Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1915; r.p. New York, 1960), p. 185 n. 22, with further examples on pp. 87, 60, 63, 87, 105 n. 52, 106 n. 70, 110 n. 102, and 185 n. 28.

[52] Best general view: J. Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (London: Hodder, 2005), pp. 216–30.

[53] E. g. St Marinus in *Vita s. Romualdi*, *Pat. lat.,*144, col. 959AB; Stephen Harding pre-Cîteaux: *The Great Beginning* (as in n. 1), bk i, c. 21, p. 96.

[54] 'Die Constitutionen des Predigerordens vom Jahre 1228', in H. Denifle and F. Ehrle (eds.), *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeshchte des Mittelalters* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1885), p. 223: '§29: *De dispensacione studencium* Essentially repeated in Raimund of Peñaforte's constitutions of 1238–40: ibid., §14, p. 562.

[55] *Cf.* his *De modo prompte cudendi sermones*, bk. i, c. 99 in M. de la Bigne, ed., *Maxima biblioteca veterum patrum,* Lyons, 1677, vol 25, cols. 456E–567F; at col. 506A.

[56] Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect*, p. 182.

in their ancient traditions of learning, and worried also that potential recruits were frightened away by the amount of liturgy to be memorized. Their English General Chapter of that year, besides providing for monks to study (in their own monasteries or at Oxford), cut what they termed 'accretions' to the liturgy. This change was hotly disputed in the order, even more hotly outside it: the bishop of Worcester told the Benedictines in Worcester to stick to the liturgy as it was, and in London the king, Edward I – was he glad of the chance? – found in the 'laziness and ingratitude' of the monks a ground for imposing a new tax on monasteries.[57]

Study was thus increasing pressure on the orders' prayer-time, just as, in lay society, pressure was growing at the expense of *festa ferianda*, the holy days which stopped people from working when they increasingly felt they had to.[58] In universities this time pressure was especially intense. In Oxford, we learn this from efforts to resist it. To quote R. B. Dobson again, 'the obligation to observe the liturgy and to celebrate a wide variety of masses tends to figure much more prominently than regulations about academic matters'.[59]

But it was not an easy problem. One of the similarities of study to prayer was its asceticism, when taken seriously. The twelfth-century scholar, Bernard of Chartres, liked to tell his pupils how study called for:

> *Mens humilis, studium querendi, vita quieta*
> *Scrutinium tacitum, paupertas, terra aliena.*[60]

These demands were not wholly different from those on a monk or friar. The pro-study party among the early Franciscans observed diligent study could be a surer path to 'evangelical perfection' than lazy participation in liturgical offices.[61] The similarity extends to exposure to the same temptations. Scholars working away at night might nod off over books, much like Cistercians in mattins.[62] Or, short of that, they could easily let concentration lapse, in one occupation as in the other. 'Better one psalm said with concentration than one without' is a common theme in ascetic literature for religious, and the same motif was reworked for mass consumption by a thirteenth-century *exemplum*, which told how Man A bet Man B a fine horse if Man B could get through a *Paternoster* without losing concentration, and how, halfway through the

[57] W. A. Pantin, 'Documents illustrating the activities of the General and Provincial Chapters of the English Black Monks, 1215–1500, Part 1' Camden Society, 3rd series, no. 45 (London: Camden Society, 1931), pp. 60–101 Worcester: §29, pp. 93–4. Edward I: §28a, p. 93. International debate: E. Bishop, *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, r.p. 1962), p. 229, n. 2 (a note not in the original 1918 edition).

[58] B. Harvey, 'Work and *Festa Ferianda* in Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 23 (1972), pp. 289–308.

[59] 'The religious orders' (as in n. 19), p. 561.

[60] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, bk vii, c. 13; ed. C. C. J. Webb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909), vol. 2, p. 145.

[61] Olivi and the 'Four Masters', quoted by Şenocak *The Poor and the Perfect*, pp. 118, 135, in the chapter 'Studying as Evangelical Perfection', pp. 76–143.

[62] E. g. a scholar: Thomas Cantimprensis, *Bonum universale de apibus*, ii, c. 57 §33; ed. G. Colvenerius (Douai, 1605), pp. 562–3 (The 1627 edition pagination differs very slightly). Cistercians: *Great Beginning* (as in n. 1), bk iii, c. 5, §7, p. 228; c. 22, p. 288; iv, c. 26, p. 369 (a hammer device set up to keep a monk awake); v, c. 16, pp. 412–13; and c. 17, pp. 480–1 and 484.

prayer, Man B let his thoughts drift to the horse he was about to win – and lost it.[63] Scholars had just the same problem. Albert the Great, no less, confessed to a young Dominican he befriended how, he, Albert, was sometimes tempted by the devil to let his concentration wander, and how he dealt with the devil successfully in the standard way, by making a sign of the cross.[64]

Rashdall's *History of the Universities* began as a prize essay and grew to three volumes, and even now (to judge from everything written since) ranks as a mere introduction. Like monasteries, as subjects of study, universities grow continuously the deeper you get into them, like the temple in Ezekiel 40. So I offer some sort of answer to my question, and add two afterthoughts. Because study of the right kind is good, and universities of the right shape and constitution do it well, no religious, of any order, can count the university as a 'foe'; the only possible points of disagreement being what constitutes rightness in either case. Universities or parts of them can make themselves 'foes' of religious orders; but that is another matter, and 'par for the course' for religious orders. For instance there is one post-Enlightenment tradition which thinks theology 'stifled' science;[65] and although I cannot possibly dilate here on a conviction that this is diametrically opposite to the truth, I will pass on to readers two small circumstances which might serve for a moment, at least, as a 'sign of the cross' to hold that particular tradition at bay. Both concern the relationship of prayer to the exercise of human reason. Does it help or hinder? If a prize were offered for the most enduring medieval achievements of pure and practical reasoning respectively, candidates in their respective classes would surely be Anselm's 'ontological proof' of God's existence – turned upside-down, I know, as soon as written, but still a puzzle to philosophers – and the Gothic cathedral. We happen to have credible autobiographical recollections from the two men responsible, which tell of their 'eureka' moments when they solved their problem. Both came in the immediate context of the Benedictine night-office. Anselm describes how, having long eluded him, the 'proof' came to him during mattins (where was his concentration?).[66] Suger, builder of St Denis, the first 'Gothic' cathedral, recounts how he had long wrestled with the biggest technical challenge, as to how to support the enormous roof, and how the answer came to him *after* mattins.[67]

I hardly need say that the notion hidden here, that prayer actually *helps* the exercise of reason, was axiomatic to the theologian-philosophers who made the University of Paris a giant. Stephen Langton, who was a man of pan-European influence long before he became archbishop of Canterbury, said every lecture should start with a prayer;[68]

[63] Étienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques,* ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Renouard, 1877), quoting *De septem donis Spiritus Sancti,* bk iii, c. 7, §204, on pp. 177–8.

[64] Thomas Cantimprensis (as in n. 62), ii, c. 57, §34, p. 563.

[65] J. North, *God's Clockmaker. Richard of Wallingford and the Invention of Time* (London-New York: Hambledon. 2005), p. 31. North was a leading authority on medieval mathematics, not universities.

[66] Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi*, I, c. xix; *cf.* R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 58.

[67] *Scriptum consecrationis s. Dionysii*, # 5; ed. F. Gaspari. Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Age (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996), pp. 3–53, on p. 18.

[68] J. W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter Chanter and his Circle.* 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), i, p. 89.

and the charismatic power of Robert of Sorbon's lectures was attributed to his prayers. The Dominican whom I like quoting, Thomas of Cantimpré, a firm defender of the mixed prayer-plus-study programme laid down by his rule, confessed that he had squeezed prayer almost out of his life, as a student, for the sake of other activities, but that as an adult he knew better, and thought any Christian should aim at an hour a day.[69] He also implies, in stories, that the moral collapse of at least one famous Paris master was due to his neglect of that rule.[70]

That is a broad answer to my question. But I owe a special answer, in particular, to Dr Şenocak's excellent book, with which I have just one quarrel, but an important one. She treats Franciscan studies as a 'falling-away', because they did not do all the preaching they were supposed to do. Perhaps it was, in this or that degree or particular; but in general, it could not be, if only because the friars' choice was limited. The problem faced by conscientious churchmen, in respect of the millions they were supposed to care for, was not so much the 'heresy' in which some modern scholars show a near-obsessional interest, but ignorance. Read the visitation register of Odo Rigord, archbishop of Rouen from 1248 to 1269. It is the earliest episcopal visitation register, and a printed edition runs to well over 700 pages.[71] Odo records next to nothing on heresy or inquisitors,[72] but a very great deal on parish clergy, not least as to whether they know enough to instruct their flocks. Odo was a Franciscan. He had studied theology as a student in Paris under Alexander of Hales, in time became a Regent Master and a preacher, and would have finished a Sentence-commentary if he had not done these jobs so well that he was summoned away to head a vast archdiocese. His register reveals a keen consciousness that flocks be well served and instructed. It is hard to imagine he would not have wished to enlist other graduate-friars to meet the need.

He, or those who followed him, did so. Whether Franciscan graduates did or did not serve the public was not their choice. They had vowed obedience; and after some early misunderstandings, bishops knew they needed friars, and leaned on the orders to supply them. Episcopal policy is best documented in a strangely neglected article by Jacques le Goff, reporting on a research group he led on the friars in late medieval towns.[73] The evidence is patchy, as is all evidence on this level. But Le Goff's evidence is unanimous. From the late thirteenth century onwards, bishops deliberately sought to provide towns, which were mushrooming beyond their old parish boundaries, with the pastoral care that could be provided by mendicant convents, placed strategically according to urban geography and size. By then there were four such orders, Carmelites and Augustinian 'Hermits' having been frogmarched to join the two older friar-orders by Innocent IV and his like-minded successors.[74] Mendicancy had by then been modified by gifts and urban rents.[75] Towns would have two, three or four friar convents.

[69] *Bonum universale* (as in n. 62), ii, c. 32, §6, p. 370.
[70] Ibid., ii, c. 48, §5, p. 440; *cf.* ii, c. 32, §3.
[71] Ed. T. Bonnin (Rouen, 1852); transl. S. M. Brown (with J. F. O'Sullivan), *The Register of Eudes of Rouen.* Records of Civilization; Sources and Studies. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).
[72] Bonnin, pp. 16, 356, 387, 541 (=Brown, pp. 175, 405, 440, 619).
[73] J. Le Goff, ''Ordres mendiants et urbanisations dans la France médiévale', *Annales, E.S.C.,* 25 (1970), pp. 924–46.
[74] F. Andrews, *The Other Friars* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), esp pp. 49–68, 83–93.
[75] A. Guerreau, 'Rentes des ordres mendiants à Mâcon au xive siècle', *Annales E.S.C.,* 25 (1970), pp. 956–65.

The numbers are an index of the town's population, because it was planned that way. A radical minority of friars, most vociferously among Franciscans, complained, and were either cruelly silenced, or placated, according to circumstance. But the system itself won through. Any order which tried to resist it would not have survived the clean-sweeps of small orders in 1274 and 1311. Some did resist, and did not survive. Putting any high intellectual achievements (Duns Scotus, and so on) quite on one side, Dr Şenocak's friars had to serve the Church at large, and that meant that theology graduates, from Paris or the junior imitators emerging all round it, were needed for to prepare them.

In view of my 'convergence' theory, it should be added that comparable considerations applied even in enclosed orders, because theology graduates were needed to preach and instruct members *within* the monastery: that had been Stephen of Lexington's concern in the 1230s, and a similar policy moved other abbots. Rashdall, Knowles and others could furnish examples.

But I would like to finish with a word about the junior imitators who were emerging all round Paris. Twelve years after Benedict XII's decree of 1336, the Emperor Charles IV founded the University of Prague. Charles had acquired his exceptional education at the French royal court, near enough to have known the University of Paris intimately; and he modelled Prague University on it. Next, all princes wanted one, and universities sprang up around Europe.

Queen of the sciences or otherwise, theology had its history. Early thirteenth-century theologians, having honed their art in the twelfth century, had to encounter the arrival of *the* Philosopher in the early thirteenth; and their response, in the gradual decontamination of Aristotle from non-Christian elements, is now mainstream history. But decontamination can affect decontaminators. Aquinas had been chief decontaminator. And a famous article by Étienne Gilson in 1927, which asked 'Why did Saint Thomas criticize Saint Augustine?',[76] answered its question by explaining how Thomas' epistemology (his theory of how man acquires knowledge) was more Aristotelian than the more Platonist Augustine's, largely unchallenged before then. Thomas assigned a bigger role to human research and its rational analysis, and less to divine illumination. Gilson dared to call this change 'the biggest event in medieval philosophy'.[77] In a later paper he called it the 'straw' which made the bricks for the building of European civilization.[78] That may, quite possibly, exaggerate the change and/or Aquinas' medieval influence. But Gilson had put his finger on a shift brought into Paris theology by the entry of Aristotle. The theology never quite settled down afterwards. The ambivalence is illustrated by Aquinas' own experience: for Gilson took that word 'straw' from Aquinas' own admission that 'straw' was what all his writings amounted to, after he had had a vision – knowledge not, that is, achieved by research and reason – and stopped writing altogether. Like many other acts of authority

[76] 'Pourquoi S. Thomas a critiqué S. Augustin', *Archives d'histoire doctrinaire et littéraire du moyen âge* 1 (1926–27), pp. 5–127.

[77] Ibid., p. 120. Comment: E. P. Mahoney, in N. Kretzmann and others, *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 608 n. 23, 610, n. 33.

[78] *Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Annual Lecture on a Master Mind, no. 21. *Proceedings of the British Academy,* vol. 21 (London: British Academy, 1935), pp. 29–44, on p. 32.

reviewed here, John XXII's canonization of Aquinas, and his and later efforts to establish Thomism as the norm, can be seen as evidence of the opposite tendencies, of theological *dis*agreements, in no measure reduced by the multiplication of universities with theology faculties.[79]

John of Jandun's scepticism about Paris theology, though he took a notoriously unconstructive path out of it, did not wholly lack this degree of justification. Despite this, or more probably because of it, the faculty slowly but surely raised its own self-image. Who was better qualified, after all, to judge deep doctrinal questions than the university's Masters of Theology?[80] Was even the pope better qualified? A few bold Paris theologians had raised this challenge in respect of papal privileges for mendicants. In the 1320s, others challenged John XXII on a question, hitherto unsettled, about the Beatific Vision, a dispute which was surely one motive for the election as his successor of Benedict XII, a Paris Master of Theology and the pope, incidentally, who began the custom by which popes officially informed the University of Paris of their election, as if the university were another great power.[81] A conspiracy of the good and the great was emerging, if too gradually to be seen by all contemporaries, and all the more consequential for that: it suited Saint Louis' heirs across the river, offering them an ecclesiastical ally distantly anticipating that which Reformation theologians would give protestant kings. But it could not stay hidden for ever. By the conciliar period, the Paris theologians' status inflation had become too big to miss, and certainly was not missed by its private victims, like Joan of Arc and John Hus. The faculty resented rivals.

This development in Europe's leading theology faculty – and theology was the only faculty, anywhere, of direct concern to religious orders – suggests itself as one factor, along with wars, peasant risings, plague and the rest, why deep spiritual vocations, two centuries after St Bernard's flight from the schools, should so noticeably have turned once more from universities. I promised to mention St Bruno again, and he comes here, 200 years after he died. He comes linked with a new version of that miracle of the dead companion.[82] It is easy to smile at that miracle, as 'childish'; but equally easy, with an effort, to understand that it actually says something very serious indeed. It apparently did so for many late-medieval religious.

St Bruno had died in 1101, and around 1298, a version of that miracle appeared which involved Bruno's memory.[83] Bruno had become a Master, not in Rheims but in Paris (not an academic place in Bruno's time). Bruno had been attending the funeral of a fellow Master when the corpse rose in its coffin to say 'I am about to be judged', lay down again, rose a second time to say 'I have been judged'; and, after lying down yet again, rose a third time to say 'I am damned'. Since the colleague had seemed a man of respectable life, Bruno became the first Carthusian.

[79] Splintering of theological opinion: J. Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 10–68.

[80] Best résumé: E. Marmurszteijn, *L'autorité des maîtres. Scolastique, normes et société au xiii*[e] *siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007).

[81] Rashdall, *Universities*, vol. 1, 554.

[82] Above, p. 273.

[83] Its birth and fortunes: *Aux sources de la vie cartusienne,* vol. 1, pt i: Eclaircissements concernant la vie de S Bruno (Grande Chartreuse, 1960), pp. 90–100.

That miracle, with no foundation at all in what we think of as solid history, swiftly rose to top place in accounts of early Carthusian history. (This often happens with late miracles: it happened to St Antony of Padua and the mule). It was chosen by Innocent VI for a big wall-painting in the Carthusian monastery he founded near Avignon; it appears in the Berry Book of Hours; Jean Gerson believed it. Debate on the miracle's authenticity grew hot in the sixteenth century, to the extent that it would end by depositing over 600 columns in the *Patrologia latina* (volume 192).

The miracle bears closely on university-monastery relations. It calls the deceased colleague a 'doctor', and everything happens in Paris. The order it exalts is the Carthusian. (The Renaissance version about Marsilio Ficino invoked no order at all). The date of the miracle's first appearance, *c*. 1298, happens to be that when the hitherto relatively small Carthusian order began to rocket towards its late medieval prominence: of ten English Charterhouses at the Dissolution, eight had been founded since 1300, and that profile is typical.[84] Carthusian converts had usually possessed books, and gave Charterhouses good libraries. But their strict enclosure, ban on self-advertisement and seven-hours-a-day liturgy mark a new exodus from academe, and an exodus to a considerable degree shared by movements sympathetic to the Carthusians, and influenced by them, like the *Devotio moderna*. All were moving away from universities, multiplying in Europe as never before. Like the migration led by Bernard two centuries earlier, these late-medieval migrants seem again to have been judging universities, with all their splendour, and rank, and growing influence in political and ecclesiastical affairs, as actually childish things to be put away.

[84] Overview: H. Jedin, K. S. Latourette and J. Martin (eds.), *Atlas zur Kirchengeschichte* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970), map 51.

19

Late Medieval Mysticism: Visionary Writing as a Mode of Thought[1]

Santha Bhattacharji

Late medieval mystical writing, with its emphasis on sequences of visions and other paranormal experiences, is not usually treated as part of the monastic tradition. However, earlier mystical writings of monks such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), which took the form of sermons on the Biblical text of The Song of Songs,[2] are understood as profoundly monastic, arising from the practice of *lectio divina*: the slow, meditative pondering of a few verses of scripture. This produces a receptive and mystical orientation towards the study of texts, resulting in particular genres of writing, as Jean Leclercq argued in his seminal study of monastic culture.[3] This paper will suggest that late medieval mystical writing, notwithstanding its largely visionary rather than textual nature, is a natural outgrowth of the monastic tradition of prayer and thought, and will look at it chiefly through the lens of 'thought' – a particular kind of theological thought arising from contemplative prayer.

Why is late medieval mysticism not usually thought of as distinctively monastic? Many medieval mystical writers, including visionaries, were in fact monks or nuns: Aelred of Rievaulx and other Cistercian monks, the Benedictines Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and Elisabeth of Schönau (1129–65), Beatrice of Nazareth (1200–68) and other Cistercian nuns, Gertrude the Great (1256–1302) and other nuns of Helfta (a Benedictine monastery which seems to have later become associated with the Cistercian Order), Bridget of Sweden (1303–73), the Monk of Farne (late fourteenth century), the Carthusian Richard Methley of Mount Grace (c.1451–1527/28), and the Carmelite Teresa of Avila (1515–82), to name just a few from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.

However, as the later Middle Ages progress, mysticism moves outside the monastic cloister into the orders of canons and mendicant friars. Here we get major teachers

[1] Elements of this paper have been previously presented at two conferences: as 'Mystical Love for God in the Medieval Church' at the conference *Love and Desire in the Church*, St Benet's Hall, Oxford, 27 February 2013; and as 'Thinking a Vision' at *The City and the Book VI*, Carrow Abbey, Norwich, 11 May 2013.

[2] For a complete E-text, see www.pathsoflove.com/bernard/songofsongs arr. Br. Sean, accessed 26 August 2013.

[3] Jean Leclercq, OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture,* trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961, rev. ed. 1974).

within the mystical tradition, such as Albert the Great (d. 1280), Bonaventure (1221–74) and John of the Cross (1542–91). In particular, many medieval mystics are members of the mendicant Third Orders, that is, men and women bound by vows or solemn promises and wearing the habit, but living in their own homes and supporting themselves from their own earnings. Among these we find Franciscans such as Angela of Foligno (1248–1309) and Dominicans such as Catherine of Siena (1347–80). However, many mystics were not members of orders as such, but lived as hermits: here we find figures such as Godrich of Finchale (1065–1170), Wulfric of Haselbury (c. 1080–1154) and Julian of Norwich (1342–c. 1416). Medieval mysticism, in all its vitality and variety, thus transcends the divide between monastic, mendicant and lay, and recent scholarship has perhaps been more interested in lay mysticism, particular with regard to the voice it gave medieval women.[4] However, all these persons, including hermits, were for the most part bound by vows and were obligated to the recitation of the Divine office, as several medieval texts emphasize.[5] Thus, some of the foundational building blocks of monastic life were common to all: the prayerful reading of the psalms and scripture, and a life under vows or promises ordered for the purpose of prayer and contemplation.

Among the names listed above, it will be noted that there is a preponderance of women. This should not obscure the fact that men as well as women received visions; one thinks of Francis of Assisi's vision of the Seraph near the end of his life, during which he received the stigmata.[6] It would be a mistake, therefore, to see visionary writing over against more traditional monastic writings as a simple male/female divide. On the other hand, sequences of visions, valuable not so much because they mark a life-changing event in the life of the recipient but because they set out a whole body of insights about Christ, do seem to belong largely to the female writers. This could be because women could not attend the newly developing schools and universities, and therefore could not develop expertise in Latin scholastic discourse; an alternative discourse needed to emerge which they could use with confidence. As recent studies have shown,[7] there is increasing appreciation for the depth and seriousness of the theology produced by medieval mystics, both male and female, written in the vernacular languages of Europe, outside scholastic modes of thought. Here, I want to focus particularly on the visual dimension as being in itself a form of discourse.

The encouragement provided to the laity, many of whom were illiterate, to use their visual imagination in meditation on God is often thought of as particularly Franciscan, following the kind of guidance given in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,[8] attributed in the Middle Ages to Bonaventure, and rendered into English in the fifteenth century by

[4] In a vast literature, see for example Elisabeth Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 1986), Introduction, pp. 1–53.

[5] See, for example, Walter Hilton, *The Ladder of Perfection*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin Classics, 1957), Book 1, chapter. 27, pp. 30–1; Anon., *The Cloud of Unknowing*, trans. Anthony Spearing (London: Penguin Books, 2001), chapter. 37, p. 60.

[6] Thomas of Celano, *First Life of St. Francis* (London: Methuen & Co, 1908), Part II, chapter. 3, pp. 92–3.

[7] For example, Bernard McGinn, *Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism 1350–1550* (New York: Crossroad, 2012).

[8] *Meditationes Vitae Christi,* ed. Sr. M. Jordan Stallings (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1965).

the Carthusian Nicholas Love.[9] However, it could be argued that this encouragement of the visual imagination is earlier, is not primarily designed for the illiterate, and comes originally from the cloister: Aelred of Rievaulx, for example, in *De Institutione Inclusarum*, written for his sister who was a recluse, encourages her to visualize scenes from the life of Christ, in which she is to insert herself as a servant. [10]

The difficulty with this particular tradition of visualization, which was formalized in the sixteenth century by Ignatius of Loyola,[11] is its focus on the individual meditator: it is designed to be primarily a means of self-understanding and personal transformation. In this it chimes well with the definition of mysticism offered by Bernard McGinn: 'a special consciousness of the presence of God that by definition exceeds description and results in a transformation of the subject who receives it'.[12] This definition has been widely noted and appreciated by recent scholars,[13] perhaps because of the modern interest in mysticism as an experience and as a transformative process,[14] rather than in its conceptual content.

However, 'mysticism' is a relatively modern term which the medieval writers themselves did not use. The term they most commonly employed themselves was 'contemplation', which derives via Latin from the Greek root 'te' meaning 'to see'. This is also the root of 'temple', meaning a place of vision, and the 'temples', the traditional site of the organ of vision in the brain. Using the word 'contemplation' therefore throws the emphasis off their personal experience and onto what they 'saw' in contemplation. Thus medieval visions tend to move away from an exercise which includes the individual meditator, and become more objectively focused on the life of Christ in itself or other theological topics. Consequently, many visionary writers themselves appear to be more interested in the content of mystical disclosures, in the insights about God that they felt they were bidden to share with others, than in giving teaching about any transformative process. While a text such as Richard Rolle's *Incendium Amoris (The Fire of Love)* certainly emphasizes mystical experience,[15] writers such as Bridget of Sweden are understood by those around them to be reminding their society of fundamental theological truths.[16]

[9] Nicholas Love, *The mirrour of the blessed lyf of Jesu Christ*, eds. James Hogg and Lawrence Powell, Analecta Cartusiana 91 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1989).

[10] *Rule for a Solitary* in Aelred of Rievaulx: *Treatises and Pastoral Prayers,* Cistercian Fathers Series no. 2 (Spenser, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1971); see also John Ayton and Alexandra Barrett (eds.), Aelred of Rievaulx's de Insitutione Inclusarum, Early English Text Society 287 (Oxford, 1984), particularly chapter. 14, pp. 17–22.

[11] See *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatious of Loyola*, trans. W. H. Longridge (London, rev. edn., 1930), p. 85.

[12] Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol.3: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the new Mysticism, 1200–1350 (New York: Crossroad*, 1998), p. 26.

[13] For example, Julia Lamm (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013), where many of the forty contributors use Bernard McGinn's definition.

[14] For a particularly interesting article from a scientific perspective, see Douglas E. Anderson, 'Neuroscience', in Lamm, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 592–609.

[15] Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, trans. Clifton Walters (London: Penguin Books, 1972), particularly the Prologue, p. 45, and chapter. 15, pp. 91–5.

[16] See, for example, the Prologue by Matthias of Linköping in *The Revelations of Bridget of Sweden*, trans. Denis Searby, 2. vols (Oxford: OUP, 2006), I, pp. 47–52.

Two recent studies both point to the importance of the rational content of mysticism. Julia Lamm comments: 'While some scholars resist the theological content of Christian mystical texts, and some question whether there is any noetic content to mystical experiences, the simple fact remains that these are theological texts insofar as they speak – indeed make very bold claims – about God.' [17]And Nicholas Watson puts it even more starkly: 'Even in texts scholars treat as epitomes of anti-rationalism, the intellectual content of contemplative writing is always vitally important.'[18]

Why, then, are sequences of visions not normally appreciated for their 'noetic content'? A number of issues come into play. One, as we have seen, is that we are looking at them as experiences, of relevance primarily to the recipient. Another, however, is that we need to situate them in a monastic tradition of mystical theology which focuses on the received insight rather than on the intellectual process by which the insight is attained. Jean Leclercq distinguishes the monastic tradition from that of the schools by pointing to its emphasis on loving union with God; however, the writers he quotes claim that it also constitutes an alternative route to *knowledge* of God. For instance, St Bernard asserts: 'We search in a worthier manner, we discover with greater facility through prayer than through disputation.'[19] Bernard is here deliberately opposing the monastic way of using the mind, which is reverent and receptive, to 'disputatio', dialectic based on a fascination with formal logic, and the rational ordering of all knowledge into a coherent and intellectually satisfying whole, which could be considered the project of the twelfth-century schools and thirteenth-century universities.

This distinction underlies what later writers call 'love' as opposed to 'reason'. It is the latter they tend to term 'knowledge', that is, purely intellectual or rational concepts. The fourteenth-century *Cloud of Unknowing* expresses this distinction by dismissing the usual academic use of the mind as 'curioste of wyt' (intellectual speculation), and drawing a sharp opposition between 'knowing' and 'loving':

> All rational beings, angels and men, have in them, each individually, two principal active faculties, one a faculty of knowledge, and the second a faculty of love; and God, their maker, is forever beyond the reach of the first of these, the intellectual faculty; but by means of the second, the loving faculty, he can be fully grasped by each individual being.[20]

Following the 'cognitive turn' in the Humanities,[21] I am going to argue that 'loving', in this medieval contemplative usage, refers to an alternative way of thinking: that is,

[17] Lamm, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 15.

[18] Nicholas Watson, Introduction, in Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism,* p. 16.

[19] Quoted in Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, p. 262.

[20] Anon., *The Cloud of Unknowing,* trans. A. C. Spearing (London: Penguin Group, 2001), ch. 4, p.23. For the original Middle English, see The Cloud of Unknowing, ed. Phyllis Hodson, EETS 218 (London: OUP, 1944), pp. 18–19: 'alle resonable creatures, aungel & man, hath in hem, ilch-one by hemself, o principal worching mi3t, the whiche is clepid a knowable mi3t, & a-nother principal working mi3t, the whiche is clepid a louing mi3t: of the whiche two mi3tes, to the first, the whiche is a knowing mi3t,God, that is the maker of hem, is euermore incomprehensible; & to the second, the which is the louyng mi3t, in ilch one diuersly he is al comprehensible at the fulle'.

[21] For a key example of the use of this term, see Mark Turner, 'The Cognitive Study of Art, Language and Literature', *Poetics Today: International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication* 23(1) (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 9–20.

another way of apprehending and working an insight through to its conclusion. In the modern study of medieval mystical discourse, we have tended to use the term 'affective' to pinpoint this difference from the academic approach to God. But this sets up an apparent opposition between intellect and emotion which is not what the texts suggest. The Latin term *affectus* (Middle English *affeccion*) seems to denote not so much felt devotion as a more neutral and mysterious sense of connection. The Cloud-author, for instance, may talk about comprehending God through love, but specifies that in the kind of prayer he recommends there is no 'sweetness': 'Whatever you do, this darkness and this cloud are between you and your God, and hold you back from seeing him clearly by the light of understanding in your reason and from experiencing him in the sweetness of love in your feelings (*in þin affeccion*).'[22] *Affectus* seems to denote rather a sense of being in the presence of God when one goes beyond human constructs in the mind or the emotions, while remaining open to God; in that openness, revelation can happen, and it will avail itself of any function in the mind that it can: the visual imagination, smell, touch, taste, physical sensation, words.

Indeed, many writers emphasize that, in prayer, knowledge of God seems to be downloaded or infused into their mind in a process which could be termed transrational, whereby they are not only unable to articulate their insights but are not consciously aware of them as concepts. John of the Cross defines 'higher contemplation' as consisting of 'confused, obscure, general apprehensions',[23] and Margery Kempe records a lived experience of this, or something very similar: 'If one of her confessors came to her when she rose up newly from her contemplation or meditation, she could have told him many things of the converse that our Lord communicated to her soul, and within a short time afterwards she had forgotten most of it and nearly everything.'[24] Nonetheless, these states of prayer seem to have an eventual outcome of enabling the mind to work more effectively, and even seem to give direct knowledge. For example, Teresa of Avila says, with her trademark humour, about the 'prayer of quiet': 'Thus, when in this state of quiet, I, who understand hardly anything that I recite in Latin, particularly in the Psalter, have not only been able to understand the text as though it were in Spanish but have even found to my delight that I can penetrate the meaning of the Spanish.'[25]

So how are these conceptually 'obscure' but important apprehensions to be shared with others? I suggest that this is where the visual imagination – in the medieval sense of the mind's capacity to produce images – comes into play. Walter Hilton stresses that

[22] *Cloud of Unknowing,* trans. Spearing, ch. 3, p. 22; for the Middle English, see Hogson, *Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. 3, p. 17.

[23] St John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk 2, ch. 10 (4), ch. 25 (3), ch. 27, pp. 179, 245, 252–5, in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. K. Kavanagh and O. Rodriguez (Washington, D.C., 1991).

[24] *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. Barry Windeatt (London: Penguin Books, 1985), ch. 83, pp.242–43. For the Middle English text, see The Book of Margery Kempe, eds. Sanford Brown Meech and Emily Hope Allen, EETS 212 (London: OUP, 1940), pp. 83–4.

[25] *The Life of Teresa of Jesus*, trans. E. Allison Peers, ch. 15, p. 158. For the Spanish text, see Rafael de Mesa y Lopez (ed.), *Obras Escogidas de la Santa Madre Teresa de Jesús: Libra de su Vida; Las Moradas* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1912), p. 96: 'Y es así, que me ha acaecido, estando en esta quietud, con no entender casi cosa que rece en latín, en especial del Salterio, no sólo entender el verso en romance, sino pasar adelante en regalarme de ver lo que el romance quiere decir.'

visual sequences about the life of Christ or similar topics appear in one's mind as a gift, which is granted only at a particular moment. They are not produced by the meditator at will, nor do they remain in the meditator's control; God can take them away at any time.[26]

It might be useful here to bring in the concept of different discourses creating different normative universes, to borrow a term from Robert Cover's 1983 article 'Nomos and Narrative'.[27] Cover describes how we create narratives which establish some acts as legal or illegal, valid or void. I suggest that this applies to what we regard as valid or void with regard to the operations of the mind. Thus, in scholastic discourse, from which modern academic discourse derives, we privilege the marshalling of evidence in support of a logically sequential argument, and we create a narrative of how thought proceeds: from a starting premise, we take correctly controlled steps, and arrive at a conclusion. But suppose that gaining insights about God does not always respond to this method, and that it is necessary to create a different discourse? Here we might create a narrative whereby thoughts are downloaded from a transrational realm into the mind at some subconscious and verbally unformulated level, and then it is the visual dimension of the mind which is activated, in a process beyond our control, to retrieve them, order them, and offer further images to embody the insight.

A preference for visual images in the mind might be a natural development of the term 'contemplation'. An image can be gazed upon and absorbed at length, without the need to interrupt one's contemplation by the effort to verbalize concepts. The images can then unfold with their own dynamism, leading where they will, without the conscious control of the beholder. We see an intimation of this process in the *Book of Margery Kempe*. At a certain point, Christ asks her to leave off vocal prayer and listen to him: 'And, daughter, I want you to give up your praying of many beads and think such thoughts as I shall put into your mind. . . . Then you shall lie still and speak to me in thought, and I shall give you high meditation and true contemplation (*very contemplacyon*).'[28] The 'contemplation' that Christ proceeds to put into her mind consists of a series of visualizations of key scenes in the life of Christ, bookended by key scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.

However, modern readers tend not to find these scenes inspiring. Partly, this is because Margery is operating within the tradition established by Aelred of Rievaulx, of putting herself into the scenes visualized, but also perhaps because of their fairly predictable order and content, within the conventions of late medieval doctrine and devotion. This should not surprise us; we would not expect a scholastic theologian to write outside those conventions, or to unfold his material at random.

We have the same problem in the visions of Margery's chief inspiration and model, Bridget of Sweden. In Bridget's *Revelations*, particularly Book 7, we get a similar collection of scenes from the life of Christ. The most famous example is Bridget's vision of Christ's birth, which she experienced when on pilgrimage in Bethlehem.[29] Bridget,

[26] Hilton, *The Ladder of Perfection*, trans. Sherley-Price, Book 1, chs 35–36, pp. 39–41.
[27] Cover, Robert M., 'The Supreme Court, 1982 Term – Foreword: Nomos and Narrative' (1983). Faculty Scholarship Series. Paper 2705.
[28] *Margery Kempe*, trans. Windeatt, ch. 5, p. 52; cf. Meech and Allen, p. 17.
[29] *Bridget of Sweden*, trans. Searby, vol. 3 (Oxford: OUP, 2012), Book 7, ch. 21, p. 251.

before becoming a nun, had been a wife and mother, who had herself borne eight children, and so knew the reality of childbirth. In her vision, the Virgin kneels down, facing the east, as the moment of birth approaches, and the baby suddenly appears on the ground in front of her; despite Bridget's intense gaze, she was not able to see the actual process of birth. This vision, while unexpected for Bridget in terms of her own life experience, accords with the medieval view that Christ's birth cannot have been the squalid and painful experience for his mother that would normally be the case for fallen humanity. As modern readers, we might expect to find greater human and physical realism in these visions, and greater historical plausibility. However, this vision tells us something important about the function of visions: they serve to give pictorial form to doctrine; they are about abstract insights, not concrete facts, and serve to explicate theological matters which are not new,[30] but need to be appropriated as spiritual realities, not just as ideas. However, a series of visions is not simply a series of illustrations, as we might be tempted to assume; they can make their own contribution to the development of how medieval doctrine was understood. As it happens, this particular vision was credited in the Middle Ages with being the first instance of Mary being depicted as kneeling, absorbed in prayer, to give birth, and so was, in a sense, highly original.

One of the advantages of a visual symbol or scene is that it can carry multiple meanings simultaneously. An example of this can be found in Julian of Norwich's heading to the contents of her first vision, in the Long Text of her *Revelations of Divine Love*: 'The first is of his precious crowning of thorns, and by this was understood and specified the Trinity with the Incarnation and unity between God and the soul of man, with many fair showings of unending wisdom and teachings of love, on which all the showings that follow are founded and in which they are all united.'[31] This contrasts with the attempt of a later scribe, using more usual conventions of discourse, to itemize the contents of the same vision: 'The first revelation: the precious crowning of Christ; God fills the heart with the greatest joy; Christ's great humility; the sight of his passion is sufficient strength against all the temptations of the fiends; the glory and humility of the Blessed Virgin Mary.' [32]The differences in these two headings illustrate the need to 'read' the visual in a different way from normal conceptual discourse; the mind is being invited to operate in a different, more holistic way.

This more receptive and more multi-levelled use of the mind can be just as rigorous a method of 'doing theology', however. To illustrate this, let us examine Julian's Chapter 51 of the Long Text, her longest and most daring chapter, as a precise and careful working out of a theological problem, where she uses the visual level to unfold the argument. It is helpful to look at a passage from this particular visionary, because she is exceptional in being able to combine both discourses, the narrative of

[30] Matthias of Linköping emphasizes that the visions 'do not give us a new Christ but the same one who suffered for us'. *Bridget of Sweden*, trans. Searby, vol. 1, p. 50.

[31] Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Elizabeth Spearing (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 41. For the Middle English text, see *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, eds. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 123.

[32] Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Clifton Walters (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 49. This scribal addition is taken from BL MS Sloane 2499.

her visions with a 'meta-narrative' of more conceptual language in which she strives to unpack the meaning of what she is seeing.

Julian prepares the ground in Chapter 50, where she gives a vivid description of the mental conflict in which she found herself over the concept of God's wrath with sin. Scholars have long been aware of this issue of doctrinal conflict in Julian, but here let us look at what she says as illustrating the conflict between two different operations of her mind: she 'knows' the teaching of Holy Church concerning God's wrath against sin, but she 'sees' no wrath in God: 'I know for certain that we sin grievously every day and deserve to be bitterly blamed; and I can neither give up the knowledge of this truth, nor can I see that you show us any kind of blame.'[33]

From what she says later in Chapter 51, she received the Parable at the same time as the rest of the Revelations, but could not understand it at the time, partly because she wanted to go on gazing at the visions that were unfolding before her. The parable comes in response to the conflict she expresses thus:

> Between these two contraries my reason was greatly tormented by my blindness, and could not rest for fear that God's blessed presence should pass from my sight and I should be left not knowing how he regards us in our sin. . . . My longing endured as I looked continually towards him (*him continuantly beholding*), and yet my trouble and perplexity were so great that I could not be patient . . . . I cried inwardly with all my might, beseeching (*seking into*) God for help, thinking as follows: "Ah! Lord Jesus, king of bliss, how can I be helped (*be esede*)? Who can show me and tell me (*tell me and tech me*) what I need to know (*wit*) if I cannot now see it in you?"[34]

There seems to be a contrast between 'reason', 'not knowing', 'perplexity', 'teach', tell', 'wit' on the one hand, and 'presence', 'sight', 'beholding', 'see' on the other. Her mind is working furiously to resolve the conflict logically, but at the same time she doesn't want to lose the contemplative 'seeing' by which she is aware of the Lord's presence; consequently, she could not be 'patient', and it is from this inner tension that she needs to be 'eased'.

She does not have the opportunity to wrestle fully with the Parable until it is brought before her mind again many years later. Julian comments, concerning the complete sequence of her visions, that 'our Lord God in his goodness often shows [them] freely to the eyes of my mind'.[35] She is not asked to look at any previous written versions of the visions that she might have produced, but is directed to scrutinize the Parable's images more closely. In each of her two scrutinies of the Parable, there are two levels of meaning, one to do with the concrete outer details and one more 'inward' or abstract; she thus uses the images to disclose multiple layers of meaning, in the same way that a medieval scholar would examine a Scriptural text.

[33] Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*, trans. Spearing, p. 114. In the following discussion of chs 50–51, all quotations are from this translation. For the Middle English text, see *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, eds. Watson and Jenkins, pp. 271–89.

[34] *Revelations*, trans. Spearing, pp. 114–15; *Writings*, eds. Watson and Jenkins, p. 273.

[35] Ibid., p. 117.

Briefly, the Parable of the Lord and the Servant depicts a servant running in haste to do his Lord's will, and falling into a pit; in his injured state, he cannot get out. Many readers have noticed the parallel with Anselm's use of this same image in *Cur Deus Homo*:

> Suppose one should assign his slave a certain piece of work, and should command him not to throw himself into a ditch, which he points out to him and from wich he could not extricate himself; and suppose that the slave, despising his master's command and warning, throws himself into the ditch before pointed out, so as to be utterly unable to accomplish the work assigned, think you that his inability will at all excuse him for not doing his appointed work?[36]

Anselm, having established that the slave is culpable for his inability to fulfil his master's will, makes no more use of this image. Julian, however, develops this image over the course of several pages. Like Anselm, she is struggling to understand the atonement wrought by Christ, but she uses the image in a radically different way.

She sees first the picture of the Lord seated '*solempnely in rest and in pees*' and the Servant standing before him '*reverently, redy to do his lordes wille*'.[37] The Servant runs off in haste to do the Lord's bidding, motivated only by love and good will, and falls into a pit. Here, the two most striking aspects of his suffering are that 'he could not turn his face to look at his loving lord, who was very close to him' and that 'his reason was blinded and his mind stunned to such an extent that he had almost forgotten his own love for the lord'. I would argue that this loss of the vision of God is the loss of 'affectus' as I used it above: he is no longer aware of the connection between himself and God, who is in fact near. Julian then sees *into* the Lord's attitude to the Servant, seeing that he takes joy in the reward he is going to give the Servant for all his woe, greater than if he had not fallen. But this is not Julian herself extrapolating on the possible meaning of the images; as she says, '*an inwarde gostely shewing of the lordes mening descended into my soule*'.[38] Although this is a more abstract dimension of the image, she emphasizes that this also was a 'showing', which she received.

Before embarking on the second examination of the Parable, Julian has a surprisingly long passage on the actual process of scrutiny, given how compactly she usually expresses herself:

> Twenty years after the time of the showing, all but three months, I received inner teaching, as follows: "You need to pay attention (*take hede*) to all the properties and the conditions of what you were shown in the parable, though they may seem mysterious (*misty*) and insignificant [or: hard to discern] (*indifferent*) in your

[36] 'Nam si quis injungat aliquod opus servo suo, et praecipiat illi ne dejiciat se in foveam, quam illi demonstrat, unde nullatenus exire possit: et servus ille, contemnens mandatum et monitionem domini sui, sponte se in praemonstratam mittat foveam, ut nullatenus possit injunctum opus efficere; putasne illi aliquatenus impotentiam istam ad excusationem valere, cur opus injunctum non faciat?' *S. Anselmi Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons, 1946), ch. 24, p. 92; another edition: J-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, 1863), vol 158, col. 596.

[37] *Writings*, eds. Watson and Jenkins, p. 273.

[38] Ibid, p. 275.

> eyes." I accepted this willingly and with great eagerness, looking inwardly, with great care (*with avisement*) at all the details and properties that were showed at the time of the vision, as far as my wit and understanding would serve. I began by looking at the lord and the servant, and at the way the lord was sitting, and the place where he sat, and then the colour of his clothing and the way it was shaped, and his outward appearance [or: expression] and the nobility and goodness within; I looked at the way the servant stood and where and how, at the sort of clothing he wore, its colour and shape, at his outward behaviour and at his inner goodness and his readiness.[39]

Thus, faced with the most difficult theological problem of her Showings, which causes her intense inner conflict, what she is told to resort to is a heightened use of her capacity to visualize. This heightened use is not only sharply focused but surprisingly systematic: she is to go methodically through the details of colour, place, clothing, stance and so on.

Her second gazing at the Parable brings immediate clarity on one point: she had already known that the servant was Adam, but had seen 'many different properties that could in no way be attributed just to Adam (*be derecte to singel Adam*)'.[40] She now sees that Adam stands for all men: 'one man and his fall was shown in that vision to make it understood how God considers any man and his fall'. And what God beholds is that man's will to serve him remains undiminished (*hole*), though man himself can no longer see his own good, intact will.[41]

And now we get some of the most arresting details of the Parable: the lord is seated on the ground '*bareyn and deserte, alone in widernesse*'; his clothing is ample and blue as azure; his eyes are black; within him is a place of refuge, full of endless heavens; and his face shows both pity and bliss. His pity is for the fall of Adam, but we are perhaps not expecting his bliss to be '*for the falling of his deerwurthy son, which is even* (equal) *with the fader*'. The father sits on the ground, waiting for the time when he can reside in the city of man's soul. Likewise the Servant is rather startlingly depicted as dressed in a short, tight, sweat-stained tunic, '*redy to be ragged and rent*'; Julian comments that she '*marveled*' at how '*unsemely*' (unseemly) this was for such a loved servant.[42] Here we find the unexpected aspect of this visual use of the mind: however focused and systematic, it is not in control of what it is going to find, but can be surprised by elements that are contrary to what seems to it fitting and appropriate. God sitting on the bare ground, filled with bliss at the 'falling' of his Son, who is dressed in a stained, ragged tunic: none of these are what we might normally expect to find in medieval writing as 'seemly'. We have only to compare this with Bridget of Sweden's vision of the birth of Christ, described above, to see the kind of 'seemliness' that fourteenth-century religious culture might have expected.

[39] *Revelations*, trans. Spearing, pp. 117–18; *Writings*, eds. Watson and Jenkins, p. 277. Alternative translations given in square brackets are my own.
[40] Ibid., p. 117; Ibid., p. 277.
[41] Ibid., p. 118; Ibid., pp. 277–9.
[42] Ibid., pp. 118–20; Ibid., pp. 279–81.

Julian then sees 'inward' into the Servant, just as she had done into the Lord, and she sees that the Servant loves the Lord in the same way the Lord loves him; and his love allows him to see that the Lord desires a treasure from the earth, which the Servant, of his own volition, runs off to find, falling 'full low into the Virgin's womb'.[43] We can see that the figure of Adam is morphing into that of the Son, and Julian now goes on to bring Christ and the Trinity explicitly into her exegesis.

In the Servant, she sees the Second person of the Trinity, as well as Adam, who represents all men. Therefore, she says, 'when I say "the Son", it means the Godhead, which is equal with the Father, and when I say "the servant", it means Christ's Humanity, which is truly Adam'. The Lord is God the Father, and the love between them is the Holy Spirit. Now comes one of her most daring statements: 'When Adam fell, God's son fell; because of the true union made in hevyn, God's son could not leave (*be separath from*) Adam, for by Adam I understand all men.' Adam fell into the pit of this world, and Christ fell into the Virgin's womb, taking on himself the weakness that is part of Adam's manhood; Christ thus takes on himself our blame, and therefore the Father will no more assign blame to us than to his own dear Son.

Eventually Julian comes to a point where she can confidently state what each visual detail represents theologically, using the verb *betokeneth* (signifies/represents) from the standard medieval vocabulary of allegory: 'That the Father was sitting signifies his Godhead . . . that the servant was standing signifies labour . . .' and so on.[44] This verb *betokeneth* suggests that Julian has found resolution because her two modes of thinking have now joined up: 'knowing' on the one hand and 'seeing' on the other. With the two sets of vocabulary working in tandem – that of Trinitarian theology on the one hand and the visual on the other – she is now able to move into a narrative mode, in which the Son completes his task: by descending into hell and rising again he shows his power, and makes our flesh, Adam's tunic, into clothing for himself more beautiful than the azure of the Father's robe. Both Persons can now sit side by side, enthroned in splendour. She thus brings her strenuous thought to a magnificent conclusion, expressed in carefully crafted rhetoric: 'Now the Son sits, true God and man, in his city in rest and peace, which his Father has eternally held in preparation for him; and the Father in the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the Father and the Son.' [45]

In looking at monastic tradition, we tend to focus on the verbal meditations and other writings that arise from the practice of slow, prayerful mediation on Scripture. In addition, our modern print culture privileges the written word, and assumes that verbal discourse is for the sophisticated, while the visual is for the less literate, who are assumed to be unsophisticated. In Julian, however, we see reflected a culture of thought where the verbal and the visual are equally complex and many-layered methods of reflection, including reflection on quite abstract concepts. In Julian's Parable of the Lord and the Servant, we see the verbal and the visual being used as absolutely equal partners in a theological process. Admittedly, Julian is exceptional in the daring, detail and depth of her theologizing. However, her writings give us pointers to how we should 'read' late medieval visions. Despite appearances, they are about underlying

[43] Ibid., p. 122; Ibid., p. 285.
[44] Ibid., p. 123; Ibid., p. 285.
[45] Ibid., p. 124; Ibid., pp. 287–9.

concepts, not concrete events; and they are dynamic, not static, unfolding meaning as they progress, not just presenting it, as a static illustration might do. They enable their recipients to explore and develop meaning, often in unexpected ways.

This visual, non-verbal way of using the mind could be considered a natural outgrowth of 'contemplation', the purpose for which the various forms of monastic life were ordered. Surveying the extraordinary flowering of visionary writing in the West in the late Middle Ages, we have to consider whether it would have arisen without the foundation of monastic models of life to follow, many nuns as its formative practitioners, and a monastic tradition of prayer and thought on which to build.

20

John Wesley and William Law: The Founding of Two Contrasting Religious Communities in the Eighteenth Century*

Ralph Waller

John Wesley and William Law made a profound difference to British religious life in the eighteenth century; both men established religious communities which were in sharp contrast to the great religious communities of Europe, as well as being very different from each other. It is not surprising that the religious communities of Law and Wesley were so dissimilar as the two men themselves had little in common.

Wesley was born at Epworth in the Isle of Axholme, on the north western edge of Lincolnshire. He was the son of an Anglican clergyman, and followed in his father's footsteps to study at Oxford. Law, who was born in King's Cliffe, near Stamford was the son of a grocer and went to Cambridge.

We know a great deal about John Wesley, through his diary, his journals, his letters and his sermon register. These provide us with a clear and detailed record of his activities, his preaching and his travelling, hour by hour and day by day, throughout his adult life. There is much that we do not know about William Law, and there are great tracts of his life of which we know nothing.

Wesley was a high-profile figure during his lifetime, as well as being widely known and fondly remembered long after his death. He attracted great attention and played a role in the life of the nation. As an old man vast crowds would gather to hear him preach, children would run out into the street to see him, and people would look out of their upstairs windows to get a glimpse of him as he passed through their towns and villages. Law was a very private person who retreated out of the public gaze and lived a quiet and sheltered life in his home village of King's Cliffe.

Wesley was one of the first people in the modern world to run a propaganda campaign to promote his cause, by publishing his carefully edited journals, and his sermons. Law shrank from the limelight and lived a quiet life of obscurity in rural

* I have chosen this topic as Law and Wesley both featured in the Spirituality Paper of the Oxford Final Honours School which Benedicta brilliantly taught for so many years. Of additional interest is the fact that Benedicta's father was a Methodist Minister and Benedicta has always had a high regard for the hymns of John and Charles Wesley.

Northamptonshire, where he would write at his desk, regularly attend worship in the parish church, milk his cows and be seen walking through the surrounding fields.

Wesley travelled the length and breadth of the United Kingdom and was seldom at home. He was a frequent visitor to Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles. He was regularly and warmly welcomed by the tinners of Cornwall, the miners of Kingswood, the keel men of Newcastle and the potters of Stoke on Trent. William Law on the other hand seldom travelled anywhere, and once he had established his tiny religious community, he was content to stay at King's Cliffe.

Wesley was a strong supporter of the Hanoverians and was loyal to King George. Law held that James II and his heirs were the rightful kings of England and he keenly supported the Jacobites.

John Wesley was an active, muscular Christian who went about doing good. William Law was closer to the school of religious quietism, which waited on the Spirit of God.

Wesley's portrait was painted again and again. The Staffordshire potters made numerous statues and busts of him. Law on the other hand never had his portrait painted and we have no record of what he looked like.

Wesley's movement made progress in the cities and the new industrial towns. His message fitted in with the upward mobility of people in the eighteenth century. His rules for his followers enable many of them to make a positive contribution to the Industrial Revolution. Law had little time for industry and cherished the old regular patterns of rural pastoral life, where villagers followed the seasons and were dependent upon agriculture.

In spite of these differences these two men were both deeply devout Christians and members of the Church of England. Their lives touched one another, with the older man, Law, making a lasting impact upon the younger man, Wesley. The religious communities which they founded were very different in size and character, but had many things in common.

William Law and his religious community

William Law was born in the Northamptonshire village of King's Cliffe, in 1686, and died in the same village 75 years later. His father was the grocer in the village but this did not prevent William from going up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1706 as a student willing to work his way through college. He took his BA two years later and his MA in 1712 one year after being elected a Fellow of Emmanuel College.

He was ordained curate in 1710 but did not become a priest until 1727, and only when encouraged to do so by other non-jurors. Following the 1715 uprising of the Old Pretender, oaths of loyalty to the crown were reimposed on fellows of Oxford and Cambridge colleges, with the result that Law resigned his fellowship, but he seems to have stayed on in the college as a lecturer until 1723, when he finally abandoned his hope of an academic career.

We cannot be sure what he did immediately on leaving Emmanuel College. It seems possible that he served as a curate in the parish of St Mary le Strand in

London. Others have suggested that he lived quietly in the capital, studying and writing. However, we do know that towards the close of 1723 he moved to Putney to take up the appointment of tutor to Edward Gibbon, who was to become the father of the famous Edward Gibbon, the historian of Rome. Except for a short period in Cambridge, when his pupil entered Emmanuel College, he spent 14 years of his life with the Gibbons in Putney, where he was tutor, counsellor and family friend. It was while Law was living at Putney that a young Oxford fellow, John Wesley, called to see him. The visit was brought about because Wesley had recently read Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728). This book had a wide influence. Dr Johnson paid it a warm tribute when he said that his reading of it 'was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest about religion'.[1] George Whitefield was also complimentary in saying of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, 'By means of it God worked powerfully upon my soul.'[2]

In *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, Law tackled the subject of Christian devotion and asked why so many Christian people fall short of holiness. He firmly believed that all men and women of all ranks and ages have a duty to devote themselves to God. He advocated devotions throughout the day, based on the old monastic practices.

In 1738, Law said farewell to the Gibbons and returned home to King's Cliffe where he lived quietly for the rest of his life. By 1741 he had been joined in his house, in the shadow of the church, by two devout women, Mrs Hutcheson, a wealthy widow, and Miss Hester Gibbon, a sister of his former pupil. They looked up to Law as their spiritual director and together the three formed a tiny religious community based on regular hours of study, prayer, Bible reading and charity, which involved the giving away of a large part of their joint income.

The three members of the little religious community lived simply; they ate plain meals and dressed in an inexpensive and simple way. They attended the church services three times a week and used their resources to help others. The two women used as a model for their religious life, Miranda, a character who appears in chapter 8 of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Miranda is Law's ideal Christian, who 'does everything in the name of God, and with regard to her duty to Him'. For Law, Miranda's perfection does not consist in the fact that she spends time and money on a particular worthwhile project; but rather 'that she is careful to make the best use of *all* the time, and *all* the fortune, which God has put into her hands'.[3] Law sees Miranda as a sober, reasonable Christian, whose first thought, when she became mistress of her own time and money, was how she might best use them, and use this short life, in the service of God.[4]

The devotional life of this little community followed the pattern set out in *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. At 9 a.m. there were devotions concentrating on prayer and humility. At midday, the devotions were to focus on universal love. At 3 p.m. the

[1] J. Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (1794) (London: Crowell, 1893), p. 216.
[2] George Whitefield, *Journal* (London: Banner of Truth, 1960), p. 45.
[3] William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* Everyman's Edition (London: J. M. Dent, 1906), p. 90.
[4] *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* p. 75.

subject was to be that of resigning one's will to God's purposes. Evening prayers, at the end of the day, were an occasion for self-examination.

Education was at the heart of their community life. Mrs Hutcheson started a school for boys which complemented Law's school for girls. She also provided a home for four widows from the neighbourhood. Law built two libraries in the village, one which was for the villagers and the other for scholars. He subsequently built a school house and an alms house for the elderly people of the area. These buildings can still be seen at King's Cliffe, although they have now been converted into houses. Law continued his studies, and produced in 1749–50 the *Spirit of Prayer*. He died on 9 April 1761.

Wesley's religious community

An account of the development of the early Methodist Societies was given by Wesley in a letter of 1748 to Vincent Perronet the Vicar of Shoreham.[5] According to this letter, at the end of 1739 eight to ten people come to Wesley in London and requested him to spend time with them in prayer and to try to help them to flee from the wrath to come. They also sought Wesley's conversation and advice. They subsequently came together once a week under his direction on a Thursday evening, and later many more joined them. This was the beginning of the 'United Societies' in London. The Aim of the first Society was, 'to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation'.

Preaching services were held regularly, but care was taken to ensure that these were not to replace regular church services or the participation in Holy Communion at the parish church. The Society had officers called stewards, whose job it was to support the minister. The duties of the stewards included managing the temporal affairs of the Society: they received subscriptions, administered the funds and distributed money to the poor. They were to be frugal and save anything that could honestly be saved. They were not to spend more than they received and were to pay every account within a week. They were not to expect thanks for all their work. It was this kind of economy whether applied to Societies or individuals that enabled people and the Societies to become wealthier and flourish.

In his letter of 1748 to Vincent Perronet, Wesley also described the development of the class meeting. The idea arose when he was talking to members of the Society at Bristol about how they were to pay off their debt. A certain Captain Fry suggested that every member of the Society should give a penny per week until the debt was paid off. Another member of the Society pointed out that many members were too poor to be able to do this. Fry then suggested that 11 of the poorest people were to be placed under his care and that he would call upon them weekly and collect whatever they were able to give. If they could give nothing or very little, he would make up their contribution from his own resources. Moreover he suggested that the better-off

[5] John Wesley, *Letter of 1748, The Works of John Wesley* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872), vol. 8, pp. 248–71.

members of the Society should do the same: they should each have 11 members of the Society attached to them. In this way the rich members would make up for the inability of the poor to pay. It should also be noted that members were already giving one penny a week towards the relief of the poor.

Wesley was quick to recognize the value of dividing the Society into these groups. He appointed class leaders, who were to exercise spiritual oversight to about 12 members. These weekly classes at first had a disciplinary and caring function, that of 'watching over' one another, but the members of the class soon came to experience the value of Christian fellowship that developed in the meeting. Wesley carefully set out the duties of the class leader, which fell into two categories. The first involved visiting every member at least once a week to advise, comfort and reprove, as well as enquire about their spiritual state. The second part of the class leader's responsibilities was to meet weekly with the minister and stewards and report on any member who was sick or in trouble, pay over any money collected, and show the accounts.

Wesley set up quarterly meetings so that he could talk to individual members of the Society. He gave out tickets, with an individual's name written on them, to those he felt were seriously pursuing the Christian life. Disorderly members were not given a new ticket and were thereby deemed no longer to be members of the company.

Unlike Whitefield, who preached to large crowds and then moved on, John Wesley desired to set up a religious community in every place he preached. As we have seen, he appointed leaders of that community who were responsible to him for the spiritual growth and well-being of all the members of the community.

These were not exclusive clubs, and in contrast to Law's tiny religious household, Wesley's communities were open to anyone who was willing to keep the rules and wished to join. The members were not bound together by oaths of obedience and by sharing a common building, but by their desire to live out the Christian life. But these communities were not confined by a narrow spiritual life. There were the great communion services which Wesley conducted, often attended by thousands of people. The worship in the preaching houses and the prayers in the meetings always went alongside receiving the Eucharist in the parish church. This broad spirituality was sustained by the *Methodist Magazine*, and the *Christian Library* where Wesley abridged many Christian classics in order to make them available to members of the societies. There were the institutions; the orphanages, the schools and the free dispensaries. All of these were a means by which men, women and children shared in the religious life of the community.

Three characteristics of the two religious communities

These two very different religious communities had many things in common including a stress on the importance of worship, prayer being at the heart of the community, and an emphasis on education. In addition to these and other important aspects of religious life, both Law and Wesley set out for their respective communities' three key issues of (1) the right use of money, (2) the care of the poor and (3) the importance of singing. Let us look at each in turn.

The right use of money

One cannot read Wesley's views on the right use of money without realizing how much he was influenced by William Law. The guidance given by both men to their followers can be summarized under five points.[6]

First, all wealth comes from God, and we must use everything as servants of God. We should not divide our duty between duty to God and to our neighbours but we should consider all as duty to God. It is not a proper use of money to give some to charity and to squander the rest, but all money must be spent well and used in accordance with God's will.

Secondly it is our God-given duty to use money to provide for our basic needs. We require food, clothing and shelter, but there is no need to indulge ourselves with expensive clothing and luxurious food. Law used the character of Miranda (from his *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*) as his ideal Christian, who had made it a rule to spend no more than she needed on herself, but only enough to enable her to dress inexpensively, eat simple food and be clean. Wesley went beyond Law in urging his followers to make provision not only for themselves but also for their families and their dependants, both now and for the future. He also encouraged those who were engaged in business to ensure that the business was well capitalized so that the workers would have secure employment and the customers would have reliable supplies.

Thirdly, with wealth comes great responsibility and an opportunity to do good. Both men agreed that using money well can be a great means of doing much good.

Fourthly, if we waste money we waste a valuable talent and make useless that which is a powerful means of doing good. It is easy to turn our money into a means of corrupting ourselves. If we do not spend our money in doing good to others, we will spend it in doing harm to ourselves. There is no middle way. It is strictly forbidden for the Christian to amass more of the world's goods than he or she needs, such as adding houses to houses or fields to fields. If our aim is solely to horde money, we might as well throw it into the fire or cast it into the sea.

Finally, both religious leaders agreed that there was an important spiritual dimension in the use of money. If we become reliant on money solely for enjoyment and entertainment it may well close our minds to God.

Wesley emphasized to his followers a further important factor, that money will not isolate us from sickness or disease or pain. At the end of life it will not sweeten death, or restore the years that have gone, or even delay the moment of our passing.

Wesley's well-known sermon on 'The Use of Money' is one of the great classical statements on the Christian attitude to wealth. He reminded his hearers that it was their Christian duty to use their God-given entrepreneurial talents to get all the money they could. He added some important caveats; they were to do it honestly, they were not to do anyone else down, they were not to endanger their health or their family life. Secondly Wesley implored his hearers to save all they could. Money was a God-given,

[6] See: *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* pp. 56–84.
The Works of John Wesley, ed. Frank Baker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), vol. 25, pp. 91–333.
John Wesley, *Forty Four Sermons* (London: Epworth, 1944), p. 579.

valuable resource which must be husbanded and not squandered or wasted. Thirdly he believed that it was the Christian's duty to give all that he or she could; it would help the poor, it would support the mission of the church, and it would make the giver a better person.

Care of the poor

A second important characteristic that these two religious communities held in common was the care of the poor. Both Law and Wesley stood out against the general climate of opinion in the eighteenth century, in that they both refused to make the distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor.

In his small community at King's Cliffe, Law kept four cows and generously gave away most of the milk. The household always had a pot of soup on the stove and no one was turned away who was hungry or in need. They regularly provided poor people with food, clothes and money. Walker estimates that Mrs Hutcheson's income was about £2000 per year, while Hester's annual income was some £5000 to £7000.[7] As they lived a simple life, and refused to let the money accumulate, there were large sums available for charitable works.

Even in the eighteenth century, news of their generosity and care quickly spread through the countryside with the result that King's Cliffe was invaded by hordes of needy people; so much so that the Vicar led a protest against the occupation of the parish by armies of poor people seeking help. The Vicar preached a sermon directly against Law and the ladies of the community and a petition of complaint against Law was signed by many of the parishioners and presented to the local Justice of the Peace.

Law responded with a threat to leave the parish and stop all the charitable works. He also warned his opponents that if the protest continued he would write to the Bishop and to the gentry of the neighbourhood listing all the good works that his little community was undertaking. Opposition quickly died down and the next year Law appointed the Vicar as a Trustee of his charity.

From his early days as a Fellow of Lincoln College, Wesley had a deep concern for poor people. This was heightened when a destitute young woman approached him for help, just after he had spent all his spare money on furnishing his rooms. He was unable to help the poor woman, but he resolved never again to be in the position of spending too much on himself and being unable to help a person in great need.

During the bitter winter of 1740, near to Bristol, he came across a large number of agricultural labourers and their families on the verge of starvation.[8] They had been unable to work because the ground was so frozen. His heart went out to them and he immediately made three collections in order to feed and support these desperate people. The following winter he established a large collection of clothes and went to considerable efforts to distribute them to poor and needy people.

[7] A. K. Walker, *William Law* (London: S.P.C.K. Publishing, 1973), pp. 168–75.
[8] John Wesley, *Journal,* 21 January 1740.

He provided employment for 12 of the poorest people by setting them up to spin cotton. He discovered that this required little finance as the workers themselves could spin sufficient cotton to earn a wage and cover their employment costs. What was needed was organization rather than money.

In London he came across people living and working in appalling conditions, with cold and hunger adding to their weakness. He discovered that many of them were employed, including those who were ill or disabled. He protested against the common misapprehension, 'They are poor because they are idle'.[9] In March 1753 he described the suffering he had seen in London. 'I visited more of the poor and sick. The industry of many of them surprised me. Several who [could hardly] walk were never the less at work, some without any fire (bitterly cold as it was), and some, I doubt, without any food.'[10]

Wesley was determined to build upon his experiment of providing work for poor people, and he thus undertook to employ any women who were out of work in the knitting trade. Everyone he took on was given a basic wage, and on top of this more money was provided by way of a means test. In this way Wesley created a self-help programme, which assisted those in real need while preserving their dignity and self-respect. Once again he discovered what was most needed was organization rather than money.

Wesley had huge compassion for poor people. He established loan funds, alms houses, cooperatives, and gave generously from his own resources. He asked every member of his Societies to give one penny a week to feed and clothe the poor. We have a picture of him one Christmas, when well over the age of 80, on four successive bitter winter mornings, going from door to door, begging money to help destitute, unemployed building workers and their families. His feet were immersed in slush, and his head uncovered, but he did not stop until he had raised £200 with which to feed and clothe them. He confessed that he did not like doing this, but that if he did not do it, nobody else would.[11]

Singing

William Law in Chapter 15 of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* sets out his belief that singing is at the very heart of Christian devotion. For him, singing was a natural part of life, like thinking or speaking or laughing or lamenting. He reminded his hearers that Jesus and his Apostles sang hymns, not to make fine music, but to rejoice in God. St Paul and Silas sang in the night when in prison.

Law believed that the shortest way to happiness was to thank and praise God for everything that had happened; at the heart of religion is thankfulness to God. For him the singing of the Psalms was the best way to create and express the spirit of

9. John Wesley, *Journal,* 9 and 10 February 1753.
10. John Wesley, *Journal,* 21 March 1753.
11. John Wesley, *Journal,* 5 December 1785.

thanksgiving. Singing was the natural language of praise and thanksgiving. Law held that when singing a song of praise or a Psalm, it was important to remember the individuals were adding their voices to those of the heavenly company, and that the angels were joining with the singers and the singers with the angels, and that the voices were singing on earth, that which the angels were singing in heaven. William Law called upon his readers to imagine that they were also joining with Jesus and his disciples when they were singing psalms and hymns of thanksgiving.

Although William Law saw singing as something which the individual could do on his or her own, or in company with others, it was also an activity which joined the singer to the wider Christian community on earth and also with the community in heaven; through praise and thanksgiving it brought the individual closer to God.

Influenced by Law and the Moravians, John Wesley recognized the importance of singing for the Christian community. While in Georgia in 1736 he produced one of the early Anglican hymn books and the first hymn book to be printed in America. There are many references in his diary to singing on his own as a way of building up his spiritual life. He came to see the singing of hymns as a way of spreading the faith, learning the faith, reinforcing the faith, deepening the faith and welding people into a religious community. If he arrived in a place unannounced, as he did in Milford Haven, he would walk through the town singing, and before he had gone very far he had attracted a large congregation.

John Wesley and his brother Charles put much effort into writing hymns and publishing their hymn books. Hymns were a central feature of their mission. Their hymns, although written for their followers, had a strong appeal to the wider church and have stood the test of time for several reasons. In the first place the Wesley hymns, like the Book of Common Prayer, were steeped in biblical imagery. The Wesleys took biblical verses and phrases and wove them into the theological themes. It has been suggested that if the Bible were lost it could be reconstructed from the Wesley hymns. That is not true, for the Wesleys draw their material from many parts of the Bible in order to create a hymn or a single verse. Nevertheless, every line of a Wesley hymn has its own biblical reference or references.

Secondly the Wesley hymns reflected the Nicene faith and provided a means of singing that faith.

Thirdly, John Wesley ensured that his hymns were accompanied by fine music; indeed he employed some of the best musicians of his day to write tunes which would be complementary to the words. The imagery of angels in heaven playing harps is a way of expressing the notion that where words end, music begins. However where words and music combine harmoniously, as can be the case with hymns, the effect on both the singers and the hearers can be profound.

Fourthly, the Wesley hymns always travel; they start on earth and end in heaven, or they start in despair and end in hope.

For John Wesley, hymns played a central role in his religious community and made an important contribution to its growth and development. Law and Wesley both held that the hymn-singing was the vehicle for expressing the central Christian characteristics of living thankfully and of expressing thanksgiving and praise to God; ideas which were at the heart of their respective religious communities.

Conclusion

The religious communities of William Law and John Wesley did not last long in their original forms. Methodism, which had started as a religious society in the Church of England, had broken away from the Anglican communion within a few years of Wesley's death, to become a Church in its own right rather than a religious community. William Law's community had no plans for continuity and started to fade away when Law died, and ceasing to exist after the death of the last member, Hester Gibbon, in the early years of the nineteenth century. However the influence of both men continued to capture the hearts and minds of succeeding generations. Today the Methodist Church has some 60 million members throughout the world, who are still largely guided by the rules and ethos which Wesley laid down for his religious community. The Wesley hymns continue to be sung by all major denominations.

Unlike Wesley, Law's influence was not preserved through a community of people. However his books still have much to offer those living in the twenty-first century. The centrality of religion in his life is reflected throughout his writings and continues to attract many in our contemporary society who seek to live a Christian life. Part of Law's appeal is that he so often appears to be going against the tides of the time, strongly resisting forces such as modernism and materialism, rather than seeking the religious dimension within them. His appeal is far from universal; some are turned away from him because of his apparent lack of sympathy for those who hold a different view, or they find it hard to live up to the exacting standards set out in his writings. In this context he clearly sees the Church, not as a home for sinners, but as a training ground for saints. However, Law's *Spirit of Prayer* and his *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* are not simply historical texts, but can also be guides containing ideas and inspiration for living a devout life within our modern, complex world.

21

The Beloved: The Messianic Figure of the Song of Songs

Edmée Kingsmill, SLG

This essay is not written for Benedicta Ward but for Sister Benedicta of Jesus. Her dedication to the beloved has held her through thick and thin for over 50 years while in the words of the Song of Songs, she has in her turn 'never let him go'. Nevertheless, I cannot begin this essay better than by having recourse to Benedicta Ward who, in a dictionary entry of 'Spiritual Marriage', wrote:

> The term is generally used to describe the highest degree of contemplative prayer experienced by the mystic. This usage was established by St Theresa of Avila and St John of the Cross in the sixteenth century, but it is a term which has a much longer history. The use of the imagery of marriage to describe the union of the soul with God is found in pre-Christian sources, both Jewish and Platonic. Philo of Alexandria, for instance, sees the union of the soul with God in nuptial terms (*De Cherubim*, 42-52) and Gnostic writings describe the return of the soul to unity with the divine in terms of the marriage of Sophia with the Lord. It is, however, in the OT that the image is most clearly used in describing the relationship of God to Israel.

Which leads, later in the entry, to my subject:

> The tradition of applying the imagery of marriage more specifically to the individual soul in its relationship of prayer to Christ has received formulation from commentaries on the Song of Songs, beginning with Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, and continuing through St Bernard to St John of the Cross . . .[1]

At the present time the Song of Songs is a dead text, killed off by its interpreters. The loss to monasticism is the most serious consequence of this death, for the Song is

[1] Benedicta Ward, 'Spiritual Marriage', in Gordon S. Wakefield (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian* Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 259–60. I am, of course, calling in this essay on my *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God* (2009), and the excerpts from Benedicta's 'Spiritual Marriage' are quoted at the beginning of the chapter 'The Eros of God' in that book.

a powerful re-director of the passions – hence the importance once attached to it in the monastic milieu. Divine *eros* purifies human *eros.* A single antiphon from the Song at one of the Hours can be a reminder of the love which first brought the monk or the nun to the monastery. And the more contemplative the monk or the nun the more will this be so.

But contemporary monasticism has, it seems, capitulated to the spirit of the times and to the claims of biblical criticism although, apart from the occasional insight which does not undermine the commentator's main interests, the Song has escaped critical enquiry.[2] Providing the interpretation is secular it is regarded as 'critical'. Origen would have said that the Song is being read by the outer not the inner man. Another way of putting it is to say the Song is being read on the horizontal whereas its power depends on it being read in the vertical.

But a horizontal reading has been facilitated by a change in the Hebrew of one word (already noted in n. 2), and we will look into this first. In verses two and four of the opening lines we read: '*for your love is better than wine*' and: '*let us remember your love more than wine*'. An examination of this reading reveals that the word translated as 'love' was originally 'breasts' until the Masoretes pointed the plural form to read 'loves'. These textual scholars worked on the vocalization of the consonantal text from the sixth to the tenth century and probably reached the Song around the ninth. The consonantal text was regarded as sacred, thus nothing could be done about the plural form. But the Masoretes evidently applied vowel signs to *ddym* (*dadayim*); 'breasts' to make this word, *ddym*, read *dodim*, 'loves', thus eliminating, among other consequences, the implicit parallel between milk and wine.

That this was a change from the original meaning can be ascertained by a survey of earlier readings. Among the remains of four scrolls of the Song at Qumran, two fragments of the opening seven verses give a spelling which could only have been read as 'breasts'. Both the LXX, probably first century C.E. for the Song, and Jerome's translation from the Hebrew into Latin at the end of the fourth when he was living in Palestine, give 'breasts'. Other evidence is found in the Mishnah in a discussion on cheese – a process of milk.[3]

Why did the Masoretes want to change 'breasts' to 'love'? The most probable reason was a fear of anthropomorphism. Judaism, quite as much as Christianity, came under the influence of Neoplatonism, an influence on the Hebraic spirit which would override its preference for form.[4] But it may be more complicated. Another other occurrence of the form *dōdîm* is at Proverbs 7. 18 where it is similarly evident that it has been pointed to mean 'loves', suggesting in the context – the blandishments of the woman who represents idolatry – a possible memory of a cultic use of the

[2] For instance, M. V. Fox writes with an astonishing confidence on the word *dodim* at Song 1. 2 and 4: 'I render *dodim* as "caresses" because "lovemaking", which is more correct, often seems awkward in translation. *Dodim* always means sex acts . . .' *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). There are no grounds for this translation but it has been widely taken up. See what follows on this word.

[3] m. Avoda Zara 29b, and b. Avoda Zara 35b. There may be other examples of which I am not aware.

[4] The fear of anthropomorphism is already evident in the eighth-century targum to the Song. See Raphael Loewe, 'Apologetic Motifs in the Targum to the Song of Songs', in A. Altmann (ed.), *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966) pp. 159–96.

metaphor.[5] The least probable reason would have been a concern about the erotic aspect of breasts – not because the Masoretes were innocent on this point but because 'breasts' signify nourishment in the biblical literature. In the Song 'breasts' is a major metaphor, ascribed to the bride seven times by another word and a further five by the word used for the male at 1. 2 and 4, but pointed to mean 'love(s)', evidently to match – and to hide – the change made on the word ascribed to the male.[6]

Thus was the Song rendered vulnerable to a secular interpretation, and when Hebrew began to be widely studied from the fifteenth century onwards, the discovery that it gave a plural form of 'love' where the Greek gave *mastoi* and the Latin gave *ubera*, the tone of the commentaries began to alter. It was an alteration of tone which coincided with the humanism of the times and the Song sank under the combination – though not without fierce resistance. The headings given to the Song in the Authorized Version look like a desperate attempt to retain a spiritual/allegorical interpretation. But on this one word the battle was lost. However, if someone were to say: not before time, I would be inclined to agree. Religious commentaries on the Song can be quite as death-dealing as secular ones, and after the Cistercians, especially Bernard's often sublime Eighty-Six Sermons, they were. Only the Spanish mystics, more than four centuries later, approached anywhere near the mystical genius of the poet who wrote the Song.[7]

In what follows I will focus first on the description of the beloved at 5. 10-16, and to its links to other descriptions, biblical, apocalyptic, pseudepigraphical, and to the early Jewish mystical literature.[8] I will then look at those lines from which something may be discovered about the author, followed by a comparison with a later poet. Finally I will look at the hart and the gazelle in the last verse, and what these animals may signify in relation to the bride's command to the beloved to 'flee'.

The description of the beloved 5. 10-16

What is your beloved more than another beloved
O fairest among women?
What is your beloved more than another beloved
That you so charge us? 5.9

This question is put to the bride by the daughters of Jerusalem in answer to her charge to them to tell her beloved that she is faint from love. The word 'daughters' in Hebrew can have two or three meanings. The midrash on the Song understands the daughters of Jerusalem here to be the nations and expands the question thus: 'The other nations say to Israel: What is your beloved more than another beloved? What is your god more than other gods?'[9] The word for 'beloved' in the Song is *dôd*, and there

[5] See Kingsmill, Edmee, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God: A Study in Biblical Intertextuality* (Oxford Theological Monographs, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 58–9.

[6] See the chapter 'Breast Imagery', in Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs* . . . .

[7] This applies to Christian interpretations. See Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs* . . . pp. 37–8 for the Jewish Sufis.

[8] This literature is called Heikhalot, a plural form of *heical,* meaning 'temple', 'palace', 'tabernacle', 'sanctuary'. Scholars of the literature give 'palaces' for this word.

[9] *Canticles Rabbah* V 9.1.

is much that could be adduced to support the view that *dôd* either has, or is intended to convey, the meaning 'a god'. And the bride's description of the beloved, in answer to the daughters of Jerusalem was indeed understood in rabbinic literature to represent God although, as we shall see later, the beloved was understood in pre-rabbinic literature to be a second divine figure:

My beloved is radiant and ruddy
Exalted above ten thousand.
His head is fine gold; his locks are bushy
And black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves by streams of water,
Bathed in milk and fitly set.
His cheeks are like terraces of spices,
Yielding perfumes.
His lips are lilies
Dripping with flowing myrrh.
His hands are cylinders of gold
set with tarshish;
His loins are panels of ivory
overlaid with sapphires;
His legs are pillars of marble,
Set upon bases of gold.
His appearance is like Lebanon,
chosen like cedars.
His speech is exceedingly sweet,
And all of him is most precious.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

This passage links to a long tradition of theophanic texts from the Second Temple period to Revelation. The detail in it ranges too widely to comment on for the present purpose. The most that can be attempted here is to focus on vocabulary common to descriptions of a messianic figure.

Biblical, apocalyptic and pseudepigraphical links

First, as we have seen, the word for 'beloved' is *dôd* and, with first person suffix, *dôdî*, 'my beloved'. This form occurs outside the Song only at Isaiah 5. 1 in a song to God, and uses forms of *shir*, 'song', as in the title of the Song of Songs:

Let me sing, I pray, to my beloved,
A song of my beloved concerning his vineyard . . .

The first 'beloved' in this verse comes from the name Yedidyah given to Solomon – the putative author of the Song of Songs – at his birth by Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. 12. 25) and means 'beloved of the Lord'. The second 'beloved' in this verse is *dod* with

first-person suffix *dôdî*, as in the Song, 'my beloved'. In the LXX *dod* is translated in the Isaiah verse by *agapeitos*, the term given to Jesus in the Synoptics at both the Baptism and the Transfiguration, 'This is my son, the beloved'.[10]

In the Song the form *dôdî* occurs 26 times, a number which gives the numerical value of the divine name YHWH.[11] The root *dôd* differently vocalized, can also be read as the name David, and it is no less striking that the number of the occurrences of all forms of *dôd* in the Song is 33. About this number Raymond Tournay points to 1 Kings 2. 11: 'and he [David] reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem'.[12]

The combination of 'radiant and ruddy', or white and red (or 'fiery'), in the first line occurs most frequently in apocalyptic. The fragment of a Noah Apocalypse at the end of 1 Enoch describes the son born to the wife of Lamech: 'His body was white as snow, and red as the blooming of a rose, and the hair of his head and his long locks were white as wool, and his eyes beautiful',[13] a description which recalls David: 'And he was ruddy with beautiful eyes' (1 Sam. 16. 12).

A passage in Daniel to which the description of the beloved is seen to relate, especially in the rabbinic literature, is that at Daniel 7. 9-10, 13:

> As I looked, thrones were placed,
> And the Ancient of Days took his throne:
> His raiment was white as snow,
> And the hair of his head like pure wool;
> His throne was fiery flames,
> Its wheels were burning fire.
> A stream of fire issued
> and came forth from before him;
> a thousand thousand served him,
> and ten thousand times ten thousand
> stood before him . . .
> I saw in the night visions, and behold,
> there came one like a son of man,
> And he came to the Ancient of Days
> And was presented before him.[14]

[10] *Not* 'my beloved son'. See the Excursus '"The Beloved" as a Messianic Title', in J. Armitage Robinson, *St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Macmillan & Co., 2nd edn., 1914), which covers the ground on this subject through Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Greek, and the relevant literature. He does not mention the Song since *adelphidos,* 'kinsman', is there used in place of *agapeitos.* The translators of the LXX probably did not, as already noted, reach the Song until the first century CE. Armitage Robinson shows that 'the Beloved' was a messianic title among the Jews in New Testament times, which may explain why *adelphidos* replaced *agapeitos*, the word being used also by the Christians for Jesus.

[11] The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are also numerals. I am indebted to Rabbi Mark Soloway who made the connection when I mentioned the 26 occurrences. I am not aware that it has previously been noticed.

[12] Tournay, Raymond, *Word of God, Song of Love: A Commentary on the Song of Sons* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), p. 38.

[13] R. H. Charles, *1 Enoch* in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2: *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 278.

[14] The biblical references, with the exception of the Song of Songs (author's translation), are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

There is a similar passage at 1 Enoch 46. 1-2:

> And I saw one who had a head of days,
> And his head was like white wool,
> And with him was another being whose countenance
> had the appearance of a man.
> His face was full of graciousness,
> Like one of the holy angels.[15]

And another passage from Daniel:

> I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold a man clothed in white linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz. His body was like *tarshish,* his face was like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like burnished bronze . . . (10. 5-6)

Gold of Uphaz is linked here to the loins and not to the head as in the Song. The rare word *tarshish* – meaning unknown (usually translated 'beryl') – is used in the description of the beloved and in the description of the four living creatures at Ezekiel 1. 16. And at Ezekiel 1. 26 ff. there is a throne over their heads:

> . . . in appearance like sapphire [a word particularly associated with theophanies], and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about; and downward from what had the appearance of his loins, I saw as it were, the appearance of fire.

And, with a brevity typical of the Song:

> *His hands are gold cylinders*
> *Set with tarshish;*
> *his loins are panels of ivory,*
> *overlaid with sapphires.*

In the Apocalypse of Abraham there is a description of the great angel Iaoel: 'The appearance of his body was like sapphire, and the aspect of his face was like chrysolite [tarshish?], and the hair of his head like snow.'[16] And at Revelation 1. 12-16:

> I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet like a mixed metal of great brilliance refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters . . . and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

[15] Charles, *1 Enoch* . . . p. 214. I have modernized the language slightly.

[16] Rubinkiewicz, R., *Apocalypse of Abraham* in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* vol. 1, James H. Charlesworth ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1983), p. 694. It is likely that the word Rubinkiewicz translates as 'chrysolite' is tarshish.

The hair white as wool is in strong contrast to the locks of the beloved which are bushy and black as a raven, conveying a picture of powerful youth. But, as we have seen, there is no simple equation, black hair equals youth and white hair equals age, since white hair is ascribed to the child born to Lamech. A tractate of the Talmud, Hagiga, solves the problem in a typically talmudic way:

> One verse says: "His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool" (Daniel 7. 9), and it is written: "His locks are curled and black as a raven" (Cant. 5. 11). There is no contradiction: one verse [refers to God] in session [in the heavenly court], and the other to God in war.[17]

The early jewish mystical literature

All these texts (and others not cited) lead to that literature which was opened up to a small world, divided between hostility and enthusiasm for the subject, by Gershom Scholem. Since his first great book, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,*[18] enthusiasm has prevailed and, drawing countless scholars to the field, continues to develop at a remarkable rate as new discoveries and new insights are brought to bear on it. In this section I shall focus first on the early years of these discoveries when the beloved of the Song of Songs was shown to have a central role in the most controversial of the mystical material known as *shiur koma.* And then I shall focus on a recent study in which the beloved, in one form and another, is shown to be a second divine figure.

The *shiur koma*, usually translated 'measure of the stature'(namely of God), was the subject of a chapter called 'The Age of *Shiur Komah* Speculation and a Passage in Origen' in Scholem's *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, first published in 1960.[19] The chapter begins:

> At the end of his journey the Merkavah mystic beholds not only a vision of the Merkavah [Ezekiel's "chariot"] and the throne of God, but also a vision of Him who sits upon that throne – a vision in which He appears to the mystic in "likeness as the appearance of a man." (Ezek. 1. 26)[20]

In the fragments of the *shiur koma*[21] material he is a man of astronomical proportions. Measured in *parasangs*, a Persian measurement, he reaches from one end of the earth to the other. His limbs and the most minute parts of his head have secret names constructed of incomprehensible combinations of letters. The whole doctrine is linked,

[17] b. Hagiga 14a.

[18] Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Paperback, 3rd. rev. edn., 1961). First published in 1941.

[19] Scholem's classification of Jewish mysticism as Gnostic was much criticized and he later changed his mind.

[20] Gershom Scholem *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2nd rev. edn., 1965), p. 36.

[21] *Shiur koma* is usually spelt thus now, often not italicized. The variable spellings of words in this literature have generally settled into their simplest form.

Scholem writes, to the description of the figure of the Beloved in the Song of Songs.[22] He goes on to quote a passage from the Prologue to Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* which reveals an esoteric interpretation of the Song:

> And there is another practice too that we have received from them [the Hebrews], namely, that all the Scriptures should be delivered to boys by teachers and wise men, while at the same time the four they call *deuteroseis* – that is, the beginning of Genesis, where the creation of the world is described; the first chapter of Ezekiel, which tell about the cherubim; the end of the same book which contains the building of the Temple; and this book of the Song of Songs – should be reserved for study till the last.[23]

The first three of these biblical chapters are well-known subjects of Jewish esoteric interpretation. That the Song of Songs was once among them, and that it alone suffered exclusion from the other three was most likely due to the Christological interpretation Origen was to give to the Song.

After quoting the Origen passage Scholem goes on:

> . . . the Song of Songs, because it contained a detailed description of the limbs of the lover – who was identified with God – became the basic scriptural text upon which the doctrine of the *Shiur Komah* leaned. But it is clear that the authors of our fragments of *Shiur Komah,* instead of interpreting the Song of Songs as an allegory within the framework of the generally accepted midrashic interpretations, saw it as a strictly esoteric text containing sublime and tremendous mysteries regarding God in his appearance upon the throne of the Merkava. Indeed, by virtue of these strange revelations, *Shiur Koma* comes to be considered, in the fragments that have been preserved, as the deepest chapter opened up to the Merkava mystic for his inspection and speculation.[24]

The subject thus understood – namely as a description of God – was hailed with enthusiasm, and the chapter generated a learnt literature in the years following its publication. But Scholem had left out of this account the complicating factor he had included in a brief discussion of the *shiur koma* in his earlier *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*: 'Here we come inevitably to the question: *whose* bodily dimensions are the subject of these fantastic descriptions?'[25]

In 1983, a year after Scholem's death, Martin Cohen published his *The Shi'ur Qoma: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* in which he disagreed with Scholem on two counts: the date of the material, which he put no earlier than the sixth century CE as against Scholem's second;[26] and the presence of the Beloved in

[22] 'Beloved' is usually capitalized in these discussions.

[23] R. P. Lawson, Origen, Ancient Christian Writers, p. 26, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies* (Westminster MD.: Newman Press, 1957) p. 23. Origen wrote the commentary on the Song of Songs in Caesarea where he was in contact with its flourishing rabbinic centre. On the word *deuteroseis* see Lawson, n. 7, 313.

[24] Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism. . .* pp. 39–40.

[25] Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish . . .* p. 65.

[26] More recently it has been argued, and is now widely thought, that this material goes back to the Second Temple period.

this material concerning which he vigorously maintained no significance was to be attributed. It seems that subsequent scholars followed Cohen's lead, and the Beloved dropped out of the picture.[27]

The Beloved resurfaces

In a book written with Christopher Rowland, *The Mystery of God*, Christopher Morray-Jones has examined the entire field of Merkava mysticism in remarkable and illuminating detail.[28] In Part Three of this book, 'The Body of the Glory: Approaching the New Testament from the Perspectives of Shiur Koma Traditions', he focuses on the second divine figure. 'As we have seen', he writes, 34 pages into the subject, 'the evidence suggests that the shiur koma tradition was originally concerned with two separate figures: the *kavod* of God himself, to whom the scriptural throne-theophany verses were applied, and the Youth, who was identified as the Beloved of the Song of Songs'.[29]

This tradition exactly reflects what has emerged for me from my study of the Song. An examination of the vocabulary of the opening four verses reveal that they refer to God. 'Let him kiss me from the kisses of his mouth' is inevitably misleading. The word *nashaq* is never used of lovers' kisses,[30] while mouth stands for the organ of speech, or that into which God puts words: 'I . . . will put words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him' (Deut. 18. 18). 'He has put a new song in my mouth' (Ps. 40. 3) and many similar occurrences. Then comes the attribution of breasts to this male figure, followed by 'your name is oil poured forth' which is a play on 'name', *shem* and 'oil', *shemen*. 'Your name', 'his name', 'the name', without a personal name attached can only be a reference to the Holy Name. That this name is oil poured forth suggests an indirect reference to the holy anointing oils which were one of the five elements missing in the second Temple.[31] Thus understood, the verse declares that all that is necessary to make up for this deficiency is the Holy Name – one of several indications that the poet was a supporter of the second Temple. Next, 'We will rejoice and be glad in you', is a combination used in direct address only to God. It also occurs in the Psalms in relation to God, and otherwise only in relation to Israel: 'Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad in her, all you who love her' (Isa. 66.10). There is considerably more in the opening lines which indicate that the Song begins with praise of the Holy One. The poem then turns to the bride – here Jerusalem – and from 1. 7, 'Tell me, you whom my soul loves', the messianic figure remains central.

[27] Not without exception. One known to me is an article by Marcus Bockmuehl, '"The Form of God" (Phil. 2. 6) Variations on a Theme of Jewish Mysticism', *JTS,* NS, 48 (April 1997), pp. 1–23, in which Bockmuehl suggests that 'Paul himself may well have been aware of the mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs' (22).

[28] Morray-Jones, C. R. A., *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* with Christopher Rowland (vol. 3.12 CRINT, Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[29] Ibid., p. 534.

[30] The reader can check this statement against a concordance.

[31] There are different traditions for the five missing elements. Cant. Rabbah (V111. 9, 3) gives: the oil of anointing, the ark, the holy spirit, and the Urim and Thummin.

To return to Morray-Jones, there are four sections in his Part Three which particularly relate to the present subject: 'The Angelic Youth', 'The Youth and the Holy One: *Shiur Koma* and the Song of Songs', 'The Angelic-Priestly Messiah and the Hierarchy of Worship', followed two sections later by 'The Concealment of the Messianic Youth'.

In the first of these sections, 'The Angelic Youth', there is a passage from one of the *shiur koma* recensions:

> The appearance of his face and the appearance of the cheeks are as the measure of the spirit and as the form of the soul, which no man can perceive, as it is said: "His body is like *tarshish*" [Dan. 10. 6, cf. Song 5. 14]. And his face and the brilliance thereof shine forth and give light from the midst of the darkness. Yet although these surround him, all the princes of the countenance are poured forth like jugs of water because of the form of his beauty and splendour . . . [32]

Morray-Jones writes that an interesting feature of this text is the citation of Dan. 1. 6 which describes not God himself but the man clothed in linen, who appears in apocalyptic literature as a principal angel, and is identified in Revelation 1. 13-16 (cited above) with Christ.[33] Another passage in this section, which relates to the description of the Beloved, begins:

> He is the prince, the prince of the presence, before whom stand all the ministering angels. This is the great prince, the prince over *myriads* and *thousands* of angels who stand before him, who is *exalted above* all.[34]

In the section entitled 'The Youth and the Holy One: *Shiur Koma* and the Song of Songs', a long prayer is recited from the most mystical of the Heikhalot tractates, Heikhalot Zutarti, the second half of which cites the whole of the description of the Beloved (Cant. 5. 10-16) with the addition of 'Hosts!' at the end of each verse. That this refers to Isaiah 6. 3, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts', is indicated by the citation of this verse at the conclusion of the prayer. 'In other words', Morray-Jones writes, 'the description of the Beloved contained in these verses becomes, in effect, an expansion of the *kedusha*, which is the innermost heart of the celestial and earthly liturgies'.[35]

In the same section another passage is cited which begins: 'This is the stature (*koma*) of Yedidyah'. As we saw above, Yedidyah means 'beloved of the Lord', the name given to Solomon at his birth by the prophet Nathan. In this recension, Morray-Jones writes, the name evidently signifies that the figure described is identical with the Beloved of the Song, but the redactor(s) identified this figure with the Glory of the Holy One, although the name is inappropriate if applied to God since the 'Beloved of Yah' must, by implication, be distinct from Yah himself.[36]

[32] Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God* . . . pp. 518–19.
[33] Ibid., p. 519.
[34] Ibid., p. 521. The italicized words are those used in the description of the beloved, 'myriads' being an alternative to 'ten thousand'.
[35] Ibid., p. 530.
[36] Ibid., pp. 531–2.

The section called 'The Concealment of the Messianic Youth' describes the process whereby the messianic youth, who was identified with the Beloved, came to be suppressed: 'The Youth was dethroned and the description of the Beloved was transferred to the Holy One himself.[37] And, at the end of the section, Morray-Jones writes: 'All the evidence points to the late first or the early second century as the period when the process of suppression was initiated'.[38]

The author of the Song of Songs

There are indications that the author was himself one of the *yorde merkava*, that is, 'descenders to the chariot' as they called themselves.[39] The verse 'I went down to the garden of nuts' (Song 6. 11) for instance, has been shown by two Jewish scholars in debate to have strong links to Merkava mysticism.[40] Saul Lieberman, in his classic article on the Song, *Mishnat shirhashirim*, cites a passage from an ancient homily given at Passover:

> This is a midrash of the Song of Songs. For the words of this song are very obscure and puzzling, etc., and therefore it was declared to be Holy of Holies, for all its words are secrets of the Merkava and the names of the Holy One, blessed be He, etc. But although its words are very obscure and puzzling it also conveys an overt message, etc., and our Sages of blessed memory expounded overtly in the sense that the groom is the Holy One, blessed be He, and the bride is the community of Israel.[41]

When the scholars of the Merkava turn their attention to the Song itself they are likely to discover that 'all its words are secrets of the Merkava'.

Meanwhile there are two lines in particular which suggest that the author was, like the Merkava practitioners, an ascetic: 'I sleep, but my heart is awake' (5. 2), and the next verse, 'I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on?' The first line reveals the poet to be experienced in mystical prayer. An early commentator on the Song, Gregory of Nyssa, writes:

> What can we understand by this statement? This sleep is like death. In it each sensory function of the body is lost; there is no vision, hearing, scent, taste, nor feeling, but the body's tension is loosed. . . . Once all the senses have been put to sleep and are gripped by inaction, the heart's action is pure; reason looks above while it remains undisturbed and free from the senses' movement.[42]

[37] Ibid., p. 539.
[38] Ibid., p. 542.
[39] A curious term since the literature is all about ascent. But the practise of 'descent' may have been that of first putting the mind in the heart, similar to the practice of the hesychasts, for instance.
[40] See Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs,* p. 167–8.
[41] Translation in Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish* Mysticism, trans. David Louvish (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2005), p. 159.
[42] Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs* trans. with an Introduction by Casimir McCambley OCSO (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1987), p. 195.

Evagrius, *Chapters on Prayer* 120, describes the same state: 'Happy the spirit which obtains total insensibility at prayer.' Teresa of Avila is another witness:

> Indeed the soul does not even find itself awake in order to love. But blessed sleep, happy inebriation that makes the Bridegroom supply what the soul cannot do. . . . For while the faculties are dead or asleep, love remains alive.[43]

Some important commentators on the Song, Origen, Gregory the Great, Bernard, did not get as far as 5. 2. Others, as far as I know, seem not to have seen a reference to prayer in this line.

There are three places in the Song which evidently refer to the hazard of being disturbed while in this state of prayer:

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem
by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,
that you stir not up nor awaken love
'til it please. (2. 7)

The identical verse occurs at 3.5. At 8.4 there is the same adjuration, but without the animals, while the previous verse at both 2. 7 and 8. 4 is the same:

His left hand is under my head
and his right hand embraces me.

This is the language of the mystics, confirmed by the charge not to awaken love 'til it please.

After 'I sleep, but my heart is awake' the verse continues:

A sound! My beloved is knocking!
Open to me, my sister, my companion,
my dove, my perfect one.
For my heads is full of dew,
my locks with the drops of the night.

To this the bride responds:

I have put off my tunic,
How shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet,
How shall I defile them?

The vocabulary of 'I have taken off my tunic (*kūttōnet*), how shall I put (*lābaš*) it on' is that of Genesis 3. 21: 'And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments (*kūttōnôt*) of skin, and he clothed (*lābaš*) them.' There are a number of allusions in the

[43] Teresa of Avila, *Meditations on the Song of Songs* in *The Collected Works,* vol. 2, trans. Otilio Rodriguez OCD and Kieran Kavanaugh OCD (Washington: ICS Publications, 1980), p. 252. In this work, *Meditations on the Song of Songs*, the suspension or sleep of the faculties occupies a place of fundamental importance.

Old Testament to this line in Genesis, two of particular interest in Job: 'You *clothed* me with *skin* and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews' (10. 11 And 'With great force my *garment* is disfigured; according to the measure of my *tunic* it binds me about' (30. 18). In the Song the garment of skin has been taken off. In Job it is on, and is the ground of his complaint against God.

The singular form[44] suggests that the 'garments of skin', in which Adam and Eve were clothed after their disobedience, represent an alteration of state from bodies which originally enjoyed incorporeality, and were intended to be immortal, to bodies confined in a corporeal structure and subject to mortality. These tunics of skin were understood in early Christianity to have been cast off by the sacrifice of Christ, and our original nature revealed by his capacity after the resurrection to enjoy the benefits of both corporeality ('he took fish and ate it before their eyes.' Lk. 24. 43), and incorporeality ('On the evening of that day, the doors being shut. . . . Jesus came and stood among them.' Jn 20. 19).

A major study by Gary Anderson explores early exegesis in both Rabbinic and Christian Tradition and, from the latter, especially from Ephrem, finds that the punishments inflicted on Adam and Eve were understood as 'specific penitential disciples intended to counterbalance the decree of death imposed on the body'.[45] The discovery of recent years that Jewish asceticism flourished in the pre-Christian centuries allows us to speculate that long before Christian ascetics 'practised penitential disciplines intended to counterbalance the decree of death imposed on the body', the implication of Song 5. 3 is that Jewish ascetics were doing the same. The author of the Song is, it seems to me, attempting to disabuse his fellow ascetics of the belief that a life of sufficient asceticism can achieve the casting off of the tunics of skin. He may have been the leader of a community the members of which, he could see, had become so fixed in an ascetic praxis that they failed to respond to the beloved's knock and request to open to him. But if the previous four lines suggest a general failure, what follows gives a sense of intensely personal experience:

My beloved put his hand through the opening
and my inward parts were moved for him.
I rose to open to my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with flowing myrrh,
on the barred handles.
I opened to my beloved,
but my beloved had turned and gone.
My soul went forth at his departing.
I sought him, but I found him not;
I called him, but he did not answer me. (5. 4-6)

[44] The LXX also has 'skin' in the singular and, like the Hebrew, can similarly mean the skin of animals. But it is the singular form in the Hebrew, contrary to the usual plural in translation, which reveals – as it seems to me – what is intended.

[45] Anderson, Gary, 'The Garments of Skin in Apocryphal Narrative and Biblical Commentary', in James L. Kugel (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Midrash* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 135.

The poet then goes on to show that there is yet another garment which can only be taken off by others, by the watchmen, as he calls them (cf. Isa. 62. 6):

The watchmen who go about the city found me,
they smote me they wounded me;
the keepers of the walls
took my veil from me. (5. 7)

And now, having been wounded and stripped of her veil, she is able to give a clear description in reply to the question: 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved?'

This view, that the poet was an ascetic and a mystic, is supported by a much later work.

The *Odes of Solomon*

In 1908 the Syriac scholar, Rendel Harris, discovered the *Odes of Solomon* among a pile of manuscripts lying on his shelf he had not previously examined. After a hundred years of scholarly work on these poems it is now generally agreed that they were written by a Palestinian Jew, and that the collection was probably complete by 125 CE although, J. H. Charlesworth writes in his most recent book on the Odes: 'It is clear that the hymns . . . were composed over a considerable period, and years before they were assembled into a hymnbook'.[46] The obvious affinities between the *Odes* and the Gospel of John, Charlesworth writes, make the Holy Land, Ephesus, Antioch, and even western Syria likely places of origin.[47] His notes to the poems show allusions to the Old Testament, pseudepigraphical works, apocalyptic, early Christian non-canonical writings, and the Dead Sea scrolls.

On the affinities of the *Odes* with the major sectarian Qumran scrolls Charlesworth quotes J. Carmignac whose study of both the *Odes* and the Dead Sea scrolls has led him to conclude that the Odist had probably been a member of the Qumran community. Charlesworth continues:

> My own research suggests that the Odist may not have been a Qumranite, but he seems to have been influenced by the Essenes and conceivably had once been an Essene. That is, before he believed in Jesus' Messiaship he may originally have been a member of one of the numerous Essene communities that were located on the fringes of towns or cities in the Holy Land.[48]

There are many similarities between the Song and the *Odes* but the *Odes* came to light at a time when the Song had long ceased to be taken seriously as a biblical book. In 1908 interpretations had moved on from the pastoral idylls of Victorian fantasy to

[46] Charlesworth, James H., *The Earliest Christian Hymnbook: The Odes of Solomon* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2009), p. xxii.
[47] Ibid., p. xxiii.
[48] Ibid., p. xxvii.

the first obscene commentary by Paul Haupt, published in 1902, opening the door to the sexual fantasies which have held the floor since then. Nevertheless, the most striking of the similarities, not otherwise known, between the Song and the *Odes* would surely have been noticed had the Song not been deprived of it:

> The Son is the cup,
> And the Father is He who was milked.
> And the Holy Spirit is She who milked Him,
> Because His breasts were full;
> And it was undesirable that His milk should be
> released without purpose.
> The Holy Spirit opened Her bosom,
> And mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father.[49] (19. 1-4)

Two other odes use this metaphor:

> . . . My own breasts I have prepared for them,
> That they might drink My holy milk and live by it. (8. 14)
>
> As the eyes of a son upon his father,
> So are my eyes, O Lord, at all times towards You;
> Because my breasts
> and my pleasure are with you. (14. 1-2)

There are many other similarities. For instance: 'I love the Beloved and my soul loves him' (3. 5); 'immortal life embraced me, and kissed me' (28.6); and:

> I was covered with the covering of your Spirit,
> And I removed from me the garments of skin. (25.8)

Reading the *Odes* in the light of the Song, or the Song in the light of the *Odes*, suggests a line of tradition. There would have been somewhere in the region of 300 years between them, but that is not long in the life of a religious community, and it might be that the two poets had belonged to the same one. Whatever be the case, the Odist knew the Song and was very close to its spirit. More than that is speculation. In his *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* Robert Murray writes: 'when all is said, the *Odes* resist all systematization and it is not certain where in Christian tradition they are to be located'.[50]

The despatch of the beloved

This essay has focused on the beloved which, by comparison with the bride, is a relatively simple matter since he is only and always the beloved. The 'bride', on the

[49] The Syriac Fathers, as is well known, attributed female gender to the Holy Spirit in the first centuries after Christ, seeing the Holy Spirit especially as 'Mother'.

[50] Murray, Robert, *The Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004, 2nd. edn., 2004), p. 25.

contrary, is a series of metaphors: Jerusalem, the Temple, the cedars of Lebanon of which the Temple was built, the curtain of the Temple, the land of Israel, a lily or a dove – both symbols of Israel – and a number of other metaphors. All these have one point in common: they are the object of God's love. But there are places where the female figure appears as the figure of Wisdom, for instance, at 6. 10:

Who is she who looks down like the morning star,
fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
terrible as the bannered hosts?

Here she is not the object of God's love but as 'one beside him, like a master workman' (Prov. 8. 30).[51] And again in the last two verses of the Song a resonance with the figure of Wisdom in Proverbs supports the view that her final role in the Song is that of Wisdom:

O you who dwell in the gardens,
the companions hearken to your voice;
enable me to hear it. (8. 13)

This is address to Wisdom from her devotees. At Proverbs 8. 32 the address is from Wisdom:

Now children, hearken to me:
Blessed are those who keep my ways.
Hear instruction and do not neglect it.

Then we come to the last verse of the Song:

Flee, my beloved,
and be like a gazelle
or a young hart
upon the mountains of spices.

Before considering what might be meant by the bride's exhortation to the beloved to flee, we need to probe into the meaning of the gazelle and the hart. They are paired in the Song seven times. Why is the beloved told to be like these animals?

A search for their source takes us back to Deuteronomy and to 1 Kings. In chapters 12, 14 and 15 of Deuteronomy the gazelle and the hart occur in four verses. First: 'With all the desire of your soul, you may sacrifice and eat flesh in all your gates according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given to you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the hart' (12. 15'). Second: 'As the gazelle and

[51] There is a possible link between this line in Proverbs and Song 7. 2, 'the work of the hands of a master craftsman', which is occasionally noted and references to the Song given. See Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs* . . . p. 70.

the hart is eaten, so you may eat of it; the unclean and the clean together may eat of it' (12. 22). Third: 'These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the hart and the gazelle, the roebuck and the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep' (14. 4-5). Fourth: 'You shall eat of it within your gates, the unclean and the clean together, like the gazelle and like the hart' (15. 22). The context of the verse at 1 Kings (4. 23) is a description of the provision of food made each day for Solomon – the putative author of the Song as we noted earlier. Among the animals listed are the hart and the gazelle.

The word always translated 'flee' in this last verse is quite correct but has the wrong connotations in English, implying flight from an enemy. The word used by the poet here, *barakh*, means 'go' and can mean 'pass through', which suggests in this context, 'pass through the heavens'. How then can we understand the exhortation to the beloved to go and to be like a gazelle or a young hart? The ineluctable conclusion to be drawn in my view is that the beloved is being exhorted to go and to be food. But from where? And for whom?

If we see the bride here as Wisdom then her exhortation to the beloved is made from the perspective of heaven, or perhaps from both heavenly and earthly perspectives at the same time. Go, she commands, and be food for the world. Thus a messiah is born in Bethlehem – *beit lekhem* – 'house of bread' – and laid in a manger, that is, a trough from which cattle eat (Lk. 2. 7). And this messiah will go on to declare: 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever, and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh'. And of this flesh he goes on to say: 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood will have eternal life' (Jn 6. See from 48 to 58). And at the Last Supper in the Synoptic Gospels, he took bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: 'Take, eat; this is my body,' which is said by the priest at every Eucharist, followed by, 'Take, drink; this is my blood.'

I do not adduce these texts because I think the poet foresaw them but because I think they manifest the realization of his understanding of wisdom as food and drink, an understanding more clearly articulated by another Wisdom writer: 'Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more' (Sir. 24. 21).[52] The poet, with a similar understanding, sends the Messiah he eagerly awaits into the world to be wisdom for the world and therefore to be its food. The gazelle and the hart are to be eaten 'by the unclean and the clean together', as would indeed happen from the earliest days of Christianity.

Thus, it seems, the beloved takes on the role of Wisdom. Earlier we saw him linked to several theophanies, presaging the Messiah who was to come. But to see him also as Wisdom sent into the world, brings the vision which inspired the Song even closer to the Christian understanding of the figure of Wisdom depicted in the New Testament and explains those Christian interpretations which see the bridegroom of the Song

[52] In this essay I have focused on the apocalyptic aspect of the Song to which the language of 5. 10–16 leads. The twin aspect is that of Wisdom, the genre to which the Song continues by default to be assigned. A section called 'Wisdom and Apocalyptic' in John Kampen, *Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), pp. 12–15 shows these categories to be related in the Qumran literature.

as the anticipation of the bridegroom of all four Gospels. The Odist writes of this bridegroom in the final Ode:

> . . . I have laid upon them the yoke of my love.
> As the arm of the bridegroom upon the bride,
> So is my yoke upon those who know me;
> And as the bed that is spread in the bridal chamber,
> So is my love on those who believe in me.[53]

Which returns us to Sr. Benedicta and to her dedication to the bridegroom of whom she may thus say, with the bride of the Song of Songs:

> *This is my beloved, and this is my friend,*
> *O daughters of Jerusalem.*

[53] J. A. Emerton 1984, pp. 730–1. I have used Emerton's translation here because that of Charlesworth, though probably right, is less attractive.

22

Benedicta Ward, SLG, in a Few Words: Nun, Scholar, Teacher

Dominic Mattos

In this volume we have learnt a great deal about the lives of monastics from centuries past. Thoughts now turn to the life of a monastic from our own times, to the honourand of this volume herself.

On the one hand there is fairly little to say: born Florence Margaret Ward on 4 February 1933, after an education at grammar schools and the Bolton School,[1] and a Bachelor of Arts in history at the University of Manchester, she became a member of the contemplative community of the Sisters of the Love of God, Fairacres, Oxford, in 1955, aged 22.[2] Case closed.

On the other hand there is a great deal to say, particularly about Sister Benedicta's scholarly life. From 1972 to 1978 Sister Benedicta studied for a DPhil at St Anne's College, Oxford, under Sir Richard Southern. This was subsequently published as *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event 1000–1215*.[3] From 1979 to 1981 Sister Benedicta was a member of Wolfson College, and in 1982 began her work with the Theology and History faculties at Oxford as a highly successful and unanimously loved teacher of undergraduates. Sister Benedicta's long association with Harris-Manchester College[4] began in 1991, as an associate director of the college, followed by positions as honorary lecturer from 1995 to 1999, supernumerary fellow from 1999–2013 and Emeritus Fellow in June 2013. She was made Reader in the History of Christian Spirituality at the University of Oxford in 1999, and has taught

[1] Which also boasts Sir Ian McKellen as a former pupil, something which as a *Lord of the Rings* fan, Sister Benedicta may find appealing, despite dissatisfaction with the recent film version of *The Hobbit*; 'it may be *The Hobbit* but it isn't Tolkien's Hobbit'.

[2] For some basic details I am indebted to Debra L. Stoudt's biography of Sister Benedicta, 'Benedicta Ward, S.L.G.: The Love of Learning and the Love of God', in Chance (ed.), *Women Medievalists and the Academy* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005). When I visited Sr Benedicta one Friday in Lent 2013 to glean details for this piece it was to this chapter that she directed me, in order that we might better spend our time on (a suitably penitential – but delicious) lunch and a discussion about Pope St Celestine V.

[3] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000–1215* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1981, rev. edn, 1987).

[4] Or Manchester College, as it was known then.

and lectured on church history from early to reformation periods, medieval English mysticism and Teresa of Avila.

Sister Benedicta's scholarly output consists of 16 books, all still in print, including works on Anselm, the Venerable Bede and Anglo-Saxon Spirituality. Her scholarly views are often informed particularly by her own monastic context, for instance in her paper given to the Anselm Society (revised and first published in 1973), *Anselm of Canterbury: A Monastic Scholar* where she discusses the link between Anselm's scholarly and monastic lives. Sister Benedicta's monastic context can also often put her in a position to both uniquely understand and uniquely question the material with which she is presented. One example of this is her firm argument that Julian of Norwich, for years presumed to be a nun of Carrow, was a widowed laywoman with children, possibly living with her mother at the time of her illness when she received the visions. In many ways the view which Sister Benedicta advanced on the subject can be seen to have been started by a basic questioning of the material with respect to what made the most sense. Sister Benedicta could tell that Julian was no nun, not least because Julian's writing contains no hints of the cloister. A forceful questioning of the material and sources available resulted in a short but extremely influential publication, which has changed the direction of studies on Julian.[5] Indeed it was all the more powerful because what monastic would not want to claim Julian as one of her own?

At present Sister Benedicta is working on a major study of relics, with the working title 'Relics in the Medieval Mind'. Her remarks to me upon discussing it were as follows: 'I am happy to get on with it because I am now pretty certain that I know what they meant to medieval people. The problem is that I'm still not sure what they mean to me. I don't kiss bones.' The comment was intended to amuse (and it did), but it also showed that Sister Benedicta is acutely aware of her place in a Christian – and indeed a monastic – tradition that continues.

One of Sister Benedicta's greatest scholarly contributions has been in the work of academic translation, which in itself is a process of continuing a tradition, of drawing the great texts of the past into the future. Indeed, Sister Benedicta has provided the definitive translations of many major works from the history of monasticism and Christian spirituality, such as Anselm's *Prayers and Meditations*, the Desert Fathers and the *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense*.[6] She is currently 'wrestling' with a translation of Anselm's *Memorials* for the British Academy. Through Sister Benedicta's devotion to the gruelling work of translation many have come to discover great riches, from understanding the pure isolation of the Desert to the history of the English church as seen from the wilds of Northumbria. As Sister Benedicta has put it herself, 'To undertake translation is in itself a part of charity . . . (it is) a way of offering treasure to others.'[7]

The same of course can be said of teaching and as I am quite sure that Sister Benedicta won't thank me for an exhaustive biography, I want to instead finish with a

[5] Benedicta Ward and Kenneth Leech, *Julian Reconsidered* (Oxford: SLG Press, 1988).

[6] For full details see the bibliography of works by Benedicta Ward, SLG in this volume pp (000).

[7] Benedicta Ward, 'Translator's Charity,' in William Radice and Barbara Reynolds (eds.), *The Translator's Art: Essays in Honour of Betty Radice* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1987). I am again grateful to Stoudt, 'Benedicta Ward S.L.G . . .' for drawing my attention to this.

brief meditation of sorts on the treasures she has offered – and continues to offer – as a teacher.

For a happy term of my undergraduate career I made a weekly trek to Cowley (which as a confirmed Jericho-dweller seemed to be the end of the earth). There, at 6 Moberly Close, amidst figurines of Peter Rabbit and menacing Orcs from *The Lord of the Rings*, Sister Benedicta offered to me the treasures of Julian's *Shewings* and of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. The *Cloud* and the *Book of Privy Counselling* which goes with it are both primarily works of teaching, from the experienced monastic to the young. The *Cloud* author's work of service in passing on the techniques of contemplative prayer to the young monk shows that the work of teaching lies very firmly at the heart of monastic vocation and formation. Indeed in the teaching of the *Cloud* I find something of the teaching methods of Sister Benedicta Ward.

There is the personal nature of the *Cloud* author's teaching. His words at the start of the *Book of Privy Counselling* remind us that his efforts are personally focused and invested in his tutee; 'since at the moment I intend to write to you in particular, I shall write nothing but what seems to me most beneficial and relevant to your own inclination'.[8] Furthermore in the prologue of the *Cloud* itself the *Cloud* author warns against a half-baked approach to the material, and his insistence that his reader should read the whole text was something that, if memory serves, Sister Benedicta was equally insistent on![9]

More seriously, in chapter 33 of the *Cloud*, the young monk is encouraged to try the technique for himself and to attempt to teach back to the *Cloud* author, in a spirit of mutuality. Over all these things is the *Cloud* author's ardent desire that the young monk to whom he writes might grow in prayer, that he might be enriched. It is, quite simply, the same process of 'offering treasure' that Sister Benedicta identified herself in the work of translation. This is something that I understand as being deeply monastic in root. It is redolent of a process of formation, of gentle encouragement and growth within and around a tradition. It is not so much a forced education as a development of the mind towards a new way of behaviour. With respect to the Christian Spirituality paper at Oxford, which Sister Benedicta taught me, it was a process of gaining the skills of interpretation in the context of a tradition, and of understanding prayer as a mode of thought.

If I am allowed a rather specific, and personal, reminiscence I will share the following, that in one tutorial Sister Benedicta reminded me that our discussions, our mutual work – my feeble essays and her excellent teaching – distanced us from the 'real work' of prayer itself. It was this comment, perhaps only really meaningful from the perspective of a nun or monk, which taught me the most. It taught me how to view the world of the *Cloud* in its monastic context of work and prayer, of the active and contemplative lives intertwined.

As the *Cloud* author points out, it is impossible to be 'fully active unless you are partly contemplative' and equally impossible to be 'fully contemplative unless you

[8] Prologue to 'The Book of Privy Counselling' in *The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works* Trans. A. C. Spearing (London: Penguin, 2001) pp. 103.

[9] See Spearing, *The Cloud of Uknowing* . . . pp. 11.

are partly active'.[10] I believe that what the *Cloud* author is really saying in the 'yin and yang' scenario he suggests is that above all the mind must be free to follow its vocation, and that it is in the true spiritual freedom that comes from following one's vocation that union with God can occur.

In Sister Benedicta I have always detected that freedom of mind which comes with a pure response to vocation, for her a trifold and in all parts monastic one, as contemplative, scholar and teacher. It has produced extraordinary results in her scholarly work and in the achievements of her students. Indeed it continues to do so not only as Sister Benedicta continues to write and to interact with and advise countless students and scholars in her new 'anchorage' at the gates of Fairacres Convent, but also I dare say in the 'real work' of prayer.

In chapter 4 of the *Cloud of Unknowing* the *Cloud* author warns his reader to: 'take good care of time and how you spend it, for nothing is more precious than time'.[11] The warning has a strong Anselmian ring to it, which may be seen clearly in the following passage:

> What reply will you make in that day when at the twinkling of an eye an account is demanded of you for all the time that has been dealt out to you? How have you expended it?[12]

It is clear, to me at least, that in her remarkable gifts of teaching and scholarship, and in that 'real work' which exists more privately, Sister Benedicta makes great use of the time that is dealt out to her. She maximizes those precious moments in order to offer us treasure indeed and I, for one, am extremely grateful to receive it.

[10] Spearing, *The Cloud of Unknowing* . . . chapter 8, p. 31
[11] Spearing, *The Cloud of Unknowing* . . . chapter 4, p. 24.
[12] *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 222.

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